

THE BLOODLINE WITH LLS

A PODCAST FOR PATIENTS AND CAREGIVERS

Episode: 'A New You: You Made It Through (NHL)'

Description:

Join us as we speak to Lyneshia Johnson-Woodland, an internet radio show host, actress and comedian who was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma in September 2020. In this episode, Lyneshia shared how she was diagnosed with lymphoma and the difficult treatments she endured during the COVID-19 global pandemic. She also discussed the emotional impact of cancer and how she is appreciating this second chance at life.

Transcript:

Elissa: Welcome to The Bloodline with LLS. I'm Elissa.

Edith: I'm Edith.

Lizette: And I'm Lizette. Thank you so much for joining us on this episode.

Elissa: Today, we will be speaking to Lyneshia Johnson-Woodland. Lyneshia was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma in September 2020, while the world was in the middle of the COVID-19 Global Pandemic. After going through treatment for several months, she reached remission in March of 2021. Now cancer free, she has been able to continue her life as an actress and comedian and also produces her own internet radio show, Black Women Connexing Communities. These activities, along with her husband and two children, keep her very involved in the Washington, DC area.

Welcome, Lyneshia.

Lyneshia C. Johnson-Woodland: Hello, how is everyone?

Elissa: We're so excited to have you. So, let's start with your diagnosis of non-Hodgkin lymphoma. What were your signs and symptoms leading up to the diagnosis?

Lyneshia: Okay, so thank you all for having me. I appreciate you asking me to be here, and I'm excited to talk about my journey. The shortness of breath and a cough. So, of course, this was the beginning of COVID. It started with shortness of breath and cough so, clearly, I'm thinking, oh great, COVID. But I-

Elissa: Got COVID now.

Lyneshia: Yeah. And so, I mean as the months went on, it just started getting progressively worse and worse and worse, to the point where I couldn't sit up to breathe, I couldn't lay down to breath. It was just like somebody was choking me, like something was pressing against my throat passage.

And as women, we push ourselves and we push ourselves, and we push ourselves—

Elissa: Yes.

Lyneshia: -till we cannot do it anymore. So, I chalked it up. I say, "Okay, I'm going to go to the doctor." So I go to the doctor, and, of course, they put me on several types of meds. "Let's try an inhaler, let's try this medication, that medication." I was like, "Okay, doc, how many medications we going to put me on here?" And he says, "Well, you know, it's a process of elimination. So now that we know these medications are not working and the other things we tried are not working, let's get into some x-rays."

And then they go into the x-rays, with and without contrast. And then with the x-rays they saw cloudiness. So, he wasn't really sure what the cloudiness was and so to go into more detail, he wanted to do a CT scan with and without contrast.

Once they did the CT scan, they noticed that it was a tumor. So, the way my brain sets up is when you hear mass and you hear tumors, the bigger picture is cancer, right? But these-

Elissa: Yes.

Lyneshia: -are the words that you do not want to hear. So, after they did the CT scan, they saw a 10-centimeter tumor in my right lung, a 3.5 centimeter in my left lung.

Elissa: Oh my gosh!

Lyneshia: Right. So, he was saying the reason why the shortness of breath was coming because the tumor was pressing against my esophagus.

Elissa: Wow!

Lyneshia: But they still didn't want to put cancer on it, but they wanted to continue to do more tests. So, then he called an oncologist and, the way my head is set up, oncologist means cancer. So I'm taking this all in and I'm going through months and months of feeling horrible but still pushing myself. It's COVID. I'm trying to be safe. I have kids that trying to keep them safe and keep their head going because at that time they had finished school and was trying to figure out what was going to be happening with school, how that was going to work out, and all that.

And then, just the question of what is wrong with me and I'm never getting an answer every time I go to the doctor and get an x-ray and get a CT-scan it's no answers. And so, they called the oncologist and the oncologist decided that they wanted to do a procedure where they take a biopsy of the tumor. So, once they took the biopsy, that is when they had determined that it was cancer.

Lizette: Right

Elissa: It's tough going from thinking you have COVID and all of a sudden getting a cancer diagnosis with tumors.

Lyneshia: Exactly. So, after the oncologist comes in and says, "Okay, we've confirmed that it's cancer. We're going to set you up with another oncologist doctor and she's going to give you the full diagnosis of what to do, what treatment is it, and all of this," right.

So, the doctor comes in and she says, "Okay. Oh, Lyneshia, how are you?" I'm like, "let's get with it."

Elissa: Just saying.

Lyneshia: "Get to the punch," you know. So, she said to me, "I have good news and I have bad news." "Of course, you do. So let me have the bad news first." So, she says, "You have lymphoma cancer, and it is Stage IV."

Elissa: Wow!

Lyneshia: And I said, "What could possibly be the good news?" "The good news is it's treatable, but the only treatment is chemotherapy." Now let's back that up a little bit because when I was nine years old, my father passed away of cancer.

Lyneshia: He had throat cancer. And chemo was his option, but he passed away. Once he started the chemo treatment, it was like all downhill from there.

Elissa: So, you didn't see it as something that would save you.

Lyneshia: Right. All I heard was, "You have cancer, but it's treatable. The only option is chemo." So, in my head, I'm like, my dad had cancer, he died from cancer; and when he started chemo, it just declined. So, my head and my thoughts are all over the place.

So, she goes then to tell me how many sessions and how many medications I have to have in order for this chemo treatment to go through and six sessions and, "Yeah, so this is what we're going to do." And I'm still stuck at, "You have cancer."

Lizette: Right, exactly.

Lyneshia: So, as she's talking, all I'm hearing is wha, whawha, wha, wha, wha, wha, which is-

Lizette: Right.

Lyneshia: -Charlie Brown's teacher, right-

Lizette: Exactly.

Elissa: We hear that a lot.

Lyneshia: I am, like, "Do y'all have boundaries here? Like, is there a point where you push the pause button so I could process this because I'm not processing any of this?" I mean because, they're doctors so they have to go through, "You have this. This is what we got to do. This is how we're going to treat it." That's like routine to them. They're numb to it because they have to do it and tell people this all day long. But I'm just, like, "Hmm, I'm kind of not hearing anything else right now. Can you give me a minute?"

So, the nurse walks out. She comes back in along with another lady who gives me a whole list of the type of chemo I'm going to get, the effects it may give me, my hair's going to fall out, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. In the meantime, the nurse is trying to take my blood; there's no blood coming out because I'm like, "Do you all realize I'm on pause right now? You're not getting anything from me right now. Just give me a minute." So, I was just like, "Okay, I'll eventually get it, but stop. Like, just push pause," like you told me to push pause, "push pause please"

Lizette: Right. We hear that from so many people, but it's true though, there's not that time for them to really actually kind of sit down and say, "Lyneshia, do you know what we're saying, or do you have questions, or do you need time?" because sometimes our diagnoses for lymphoma there's so many types of lymphoma, first of all.

Lyneshia: Right.

Lizette: There's all these types of non-Hodgkin lymphoma, and then they have to kind of educate you on that, and then they try to tell you which one you have because each one is treated differently. It is just so much information.

Lyneshia: It is. It's way too much information.

Lizette: And were you alone when you heard?

Lyneshia: Absolutely.

Lizette: Was anybody with you?

Lyneshia: No, this was COVID.

Lizette: No, COVID!

Lyneshia: No one could come in with me. I was by myself. So, it's just me and the doctor and the nurse trying to get this blood out of my veins, and I am just, like, stuck because after they told me that, they were like, "Okay, we got to set you up for a port." And I'm like, "What is a port? Port Authority, am I going to New York? Like what is this? I don't know what this is." So, I had to tell the nurse, I was like, "Listen, you're going to have to pause for a minute because this is way too much. I can't do it." Once she started talking about the port, I'm like, "Is that today?" I'm like, "You're killing me right now."

Elissa: It all happened so fast.

Lyneshia: It all happened so fast. But you know what, at the end of the day, I was relieved at the fact of finally knowing what I had and that it was treatable. So-

Elissa: Exactly.

Lyneshia: Once I finally processed it after that appointment that day, I was like, "Y'all going to have to give me another day. Matter of fact, you're going to have to give me a couple days for me to come back in here so we could really discuss what is going to be happening, how is it going to be happening, what is this thing called chemo, what does chemo do." You know, I wasn't hearing anything that they were saying.

So, they gave me this big old notebook and tell me to go. So, I come home that day and the worst thing you can do is go to WebMD®.

Elissa: Yes. Never go to WebMD®. It will go to the-

Lyneshia: Right.

Elissa: -worst-case scenario.

Lyneshia: I didn't know that.

Elissa: Every time.

Lyneshia: I didn't know that. So, when I came in for my next appointment, I told her I did that and she's, "Oh!"

Elissa: Oh no.

Lyneshia: "No, you weren't supposed to do that." Because when I opened up the computer and I went into WebMD and kind of trying to Google, you know, figure out what this is and how I got it and where'd it come from. I've never been a smoker. I'm thinking if you have something in your lungs, you're a smoker, and the first thing I saw



was once it gets to this stage, it's Stage IV, and all I knew was Stage IV because my dad was Stage IV, then he died. That's all I knew.

Elissa: Yeah. It sounds scary.

Lyneshia: Yeah, very. And so, I come back in the next appointment, and this is when they're telling me about the port. And the port is where they say the chemo is too strong to really actually go through your veins in your arms because a lot of times, they'll collapse so then they'll have to keep poking you and poking you. I was like, "Err, that's not happening. I'm not going to be a pincushion. I don't want to do that." And so, then she said, "The port is just a straight shot to the vein and just gets there and that's the best way." I was still on the fence about it because I'm still trying to process all this.

Elissa: Right.

Lyneshia: So, they finally got me in to start chemo a week after. Like they wanted to start it immediately. So, I was kind of on the fence with the port and I was like, "Hmm, I don't think I want to get the port." And they were like, "Okay, so-" "This was like a Thursday, so on Monday. "So, Monday we're going to start the chemo." I was like, "Wait, I think I want the port because I don't want you have to pull the needle out, put it back in to try and find my veins. I don't want that."

So, they had to change my first chemo because I wanted the port, and I'm thinking once you get the port, they give you a couple weeks to heal up from that.

Elissa: No, no.

Lyneshia: Uh-uh. They gave me a couple days until they wanted to start my chemo, and it was the worst feeling ever because I didn't know at the time you could get like an icepack to numb the area, or they can give you a cream to numb the area when they stick you. And I'm a tough cookie, and I just took the pain; and I really didn't have to, but I didn't know. Like I said, there's just so much information that they give

you at one time. I didn't even have time to think about it or process it because they were moving so fast. They were like, "We really have to get in here and get this chemo in your system so it can start doing what it needs to do. Now it kills all the cancer cells, but you got to understand that it's going to kill everything else in you. Your hair's going to fall out, your nails are going to turn black. You're going to lose a whole lot of weight." And the list just went on. I'm like, "woah!"

Lizette: Yeah

Lyneshia: Only thing I could say was, I never asked God why. I just said, "Lord, I trust you, and I'm going to trust the process." But it was the most scariest experience I had to go through in my entire life because I had to think about telling my kids, I had to think about telling my husband, I had to think about telling family and friends. And so, when I first found out I told nobody for about three months-

Lizette: Wow!

Lyneshia: -because I only talked to people who I knew had cancer because I didn't want a pity party.

Elissa: Right.

Lyneshia: "Oh my God, you have cancer. It's going to be okay. Don't you worry about" - "Okay, get out of my - I can't talk to you-"

Elissa: "You're brave."

Lyneshia: "-right now. I really don't want to talk to you right now. I really need to speak to somebody who has gone through this and can know what my mental is doing right now and how to process this and get through it."

Lizette: Yeah. I think one of the things in retrospect looking back, it might have been a little bit easier for you if you had that information before, right, that you could have the icepack or there was that cream or just sitting down with you to kind of

process with you that for lymphoma the stages are different than other types of cancers. And Stage IV-

Lyneshia: Right!

Lizette: -doesn't mean the same thing with lymphoma than other cancers because, I would be the same way if my father passed, and I would associate Stage IV chemotherapy the same way that you did.

Lyneshia: And the crazy thing is the day that I started chemotherapy was the day my father passed.

Lizette: Oh wow!

Elissa: No.

Lyneshia: The same day. Now granted he died in 1979 and this is 2020.

Elissa: It's a day you don't forget though.

Lyneshia: It's a day you will never forget, and I really didn't think about it at the beginning, but his birthday is September 23. I found out I was diagnosed on September 17, 2020. And I just happened to just be thinking about him at the time and he was a veteran and Veteran's Day was coming up. When I go see him, I go see his grave and I have a picture of it. And I just happened to look at the picture, and I said, "You have got to be kidding me. I am not starting chemo on the very same day that he passed away." So, I just looked at it as I have two fathers. I have one father who's going to definitely guide me through this, then my dad also watching over me to say, "I got you, baby girl. You going to be okay."

Lizette: Yup, definitely. Yeah, we could all use angels to watch over us.

Lyneshia: I didn't even realize that lymphoma cancer was a type of blood cancer. And it was just so much I read. I don't even know how I'm going to say this, but I'm reading all of this now. Before I couldn't read any of it. I was devastated.

I remember when I told my daughter, I said, "Neveah, there's something that I have to tell you and I want you to know this. " Because my generation, older generation they didn't tell you anything. They didn't tell you when they were sick, they didn't tell you when they went to the doctor, they didn't tell you what they had, they didn't tell you anything. You just all of a sudden, you're here, next minute you're not, you know.

But I'm very transparent with my kids and I like them to know what is going on with me as far as health wise because I remember when I first found out there was so much family history that I needed to know that I didn't know. Like, I had no idea on my father's side, all of his sisters and brothers had cancer. I didn't know that because I was so young, I didn't communicate with that side of the family after he passed away until I got much older because I wanted to know why am I acting like this? Why is my personality so fun and my mom is so different? Like, I need to know who my dad was, you know.

So, after doing more research and talking to my dad's side of the family, I found out that all of them had some type of cancer.

Elissa: Wow!

Lyneshia: And so, it was very important for your kids to know that type of things to make them aware of, you know, staying up on their health and doing your diagnosis and keeping your doctor's appointment. And when you're not feeling something, you need to get to the doctor. I know home remedies work sometimes, but in this case, it didn't.

So, I told my daughter, I said, "Mommy has cancer, but it's treatable, and we're going through chemo now to treat it. And I'm going to be okay." And I said, "What did you

hear me say?" She said, "You have cancer and you're going to die!" I was like, "No, no. No, no, no. We're not going to do that." And I know so many cancer survivors, so I think that's what helped her. I was like, "Well look at Miss Such and Such, and look at Miss Such and Such, and look at Miss Such and Such, they're 10-, 12-, 20-, 30-year survivors. So, mommy is going to live and not die. Let's both say that together." To give her comfort, "This is going to happen, mommy's going to live, mommy's not going to die and we're going to get through this." And immediately her tears shut off because she was like, "You know what, you're right, we're going to get through this. You're going to live; you're not going to die."

And so, my 14-year-old daughter kicked into, like, bodyguard mode and both of them, my children, I have a son 21 and my husband, and they just really stepped up and really helped out where they could because there are moments where you need help but don't even know how to ask. You're in pain but you can't even describe what the pain is. And so, it's frustrating trying to convey that to somebody else who don't even know what you're going through or never has experienced going through chemo. That's why it took me so long to tell people actually what was going on because I needed to relate to people who knew exactly what I was feeling, exactly what my thought process was, exactly be able to tell me, "Okay, so this is going to be the next thing that's going to happen, and this is what you're going to feel." So that helped out a lot— because I connected with so many support groups. And, like I said, I had so many people that I knew who had cancer and are survivors, so that really helped. And then, you know, my faith in God is just everything.

Elissa: Sure.

Lyneshia: Because you get to the point where you can't even pray for yourself. And just knowing that you have prayer warriors around you who will pray for you when you can't even do it yourself was comforting to know too.

Lizette: Definitely.

Lyneshia: So, a girlfriend of mine called and she said, "I have to bring you something. What hospital are you at?" I said, "Well, you can't come in because it's COVID." "I'm going to bring this to you. I don't know how I'm going to get it to you, but I'm going to bring it to you."

I won't go into the details of how it happened, but it happened. And it was a book of healing and praying scriptures. And I was like, "I think it was the prayer warrior and the little angel came to me to say, "I got you. This is it. You're going to move forward with it, and it's going to be fine."

Elissa: Oh, that's great.

Edith: So, Lyneshia, when you were in the hospital or going through your treatments, was your family able to visit or attend your infusions with you?

Lyneshia: Nothing. When I say nothing, nothing. I surround myself around very positive people; and this is what you have to do during this time, right? I'm a part of a girl group, and they got me a Build-A-Bear where you could record messages. And each one of them left a message on it, and I would take that with me. It was a colorful Build-A-Bear with a message in it, and so I was able to take that, and that's what helped.

Elissa: Oh, that's so good.

Lyneshia: Yeah.

Elissa: That would just be so difficult to go through all of this without having any family or friends be able to sit at your side and hold your hand and be there. I can't imagine being diagnosed during a global pandemic and right in the heart of it, really.

Lyneshia: In the heart of it, yeah.

Elissa: What was that like emotionally for you, first we're thinking it's COVID and then all of a sudden get a cancer diagnosis when it is still so scary out there in the

world. And all of a sudden, you're looking at potentially being immunocompromised; and you're still thinking about your children and children are little germ factories as well. And, yeah, there's so many things out there. What was that like for you?

Lyneshia: Lonely. Very, very lonely because the majority of the time I cried because I didn't have anybody; and I was there alone. And it wasn't an easy process. It wasn't all warm and fuzzy. They were good in answering any questions that I needed; and you need anything to eat, do you need anything to drink. I love the warm blankets that they gave.

Elissa: Right, those are always nice. You need the emotional support though?

Lyneshia: Yeah, the emotional support was a warm blanket that they kept giving me because I kept saying, "Can I get another? Can I get another?" It was freezing in there. My hair's falling out. I'm bald. The first time I didn't have a hat because I didn't know any better. I'm freezing. My ears are cold. I'm sniffing because my nose is cold. I'm looking like Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer in there. But the warm blankets were really cool. But it was a lonely, lonely, devastating process to go through because you don't have anyone to sit there and hold your hand and a loved one.

But I had my phone, so I would have my friends send me prayers and different messages; and we're right there with you. We're not there in the body, but we're there in the spirit. And sending me encouraging words and reading the scripture book that my friend got me. So, I kept my bible very close and read that and played games on my phone. And talked to people. I was able to talk on the phone, but it's just nothing like that warm hand holding your hand saying, "You're going to get through this, and I know it's scary." And it's the scariest moment that you could ever experience in life again because, you said it, because of the pandemic.

You know, so you're always thinking and you're looking at- Somebody sneezes. You're like, "Whoo."

Elissa: Right, you've got to stay away from that person.

Lyneshia: Right. But, you know, you're in a hospital. You've got to go through that. You're walking through, and I'm looking at people looking terrified and I'm terrified. And then you're looking at some older people coming in like, "Hey, how's everybody doing?" You know, it's always that one-

Elissa: Of course.

Lyneshia: -who just lights up the whole room when they come in there, and they just make it look like it's so effortless. I pulled energy from that; and I pulled energy from the nurses because they were really nice.

I wish they may have been a little bit more cozier, but, you know, this is their job. This is what they have to do every single day. Some, they have good patients who are willing to do what they need to do; and then you have other patients who just want to complain and fuss the whole time. But you have to be understanding and knowing that they're scared, and the reason why they're going through this and they're fussy and they're mad and they're angry is because they're scared. It's a pandemic, they have a diagnosis of cancer. You know what I mean? Some people are alone period, like go home alone, go to work alone, live alone. It's a crazy journey, so you mentally have to prepare yourself and build yourself up. You can actually lose your complete mind in it. Like your mental can be gone completely.

Elissa: Yeah, it's important to get some help, too, and hopefully talk to somebody about that.

Lyneshia: Yes, so it was really good to get support systems. I'm a part of the support system on Facebook.

Elissa: Wonderful.

Lyneshia: They're really awesome because they come in there and say, "Oh, this is my first time being diagnosed with A, B, C, D, & E or maybe like a wife and a husband is going through. My husband is going through this. Help me to say the right thing to them because you think you're saying the right thing to people, and you might as well just don't say anything at all.

Elissa: Right.

Lyneshia: Because, you know, you might as well just be like-

Elissa: People just don't know what to say. And sometimes they definitely say the wrong thing.

Lyneshia: Yeah, and sometimes I have to tell my, including my mother, like, it was difficult for her to see her daughter have to go through that; and she had to watch her husband go through that. So, it's like, "Mom, today's not going to be the day that we have one of these conversations" because she may say like, "Well did you do this A, B, C, D?" "Momma, today's not that day." So, you really have to set boundaries for yourself to know-

Elissa: Absolutely.

Lyneshia: -what is something good, and you have to let people know. You know, "I really wasn't feeling how you said A, B, C, D, and E. I'm still trying to process this, and it's hard for me to try to explain what I'm feeling, what my mind is saying, where my mind is at on a daily basis. It was hard to do it when I didn't have cancer, so when I have a cancer, it's even harder to try and articulate the things that I feel that I'm going through with this diagnosis." And even going through remission, even afterwards is still a struggle as well sometimes.

Elissa: Right. Wow. Now you went through treatment and several months of it; and then in March of this year, you found out you were in remission, which is so exciting.

That must have felt just so incredible, even though you were still in the middle of a global pandemic.

Lyneshia: Yes, yes.

Elissa: But you have the chance to finish and hopefully get vaccinated and kind of move on with your life.

Now speaking of moving on with your life, we mentioned in the bio that you have your own radio show. Tell us about it.

Lyneshia: Ah, the radio show is great. Like your guys' show right here, I'm super-duper excited. It's always weird to be on the opposite side of the interview instead of doing the interview, right? So, you've got to stop me sometimes because I could go on and on.

But it's great. Black Woman Connexing Communities. We were just sitting there one day, and these are young ladies, there's four of us, and I've been doing radio for about 15 years. We went on a hiatus for a moment because it was just too much for a little bit. You know, sometimes you just have to take, step away and then come back and revamp some things.

Elissa: Yeah.

Lyneshia: So, we just really talk about what women go through, some of the challenges that we have. We interview business owners. We interview people who have gone through a sickness. Our next episode is going to be called, "Survivorship and How Do You Survive Through Certain Things?" Divorce, sickness, taking care of someone who has been sick. Business owner, new business owners and the up-and-coming business owner. How hard is it for you to maneuver your way through business as a woman?

We just try and get different viewpoints of what it's like and show sisterhood in women because we do so much. We're resilient. We have so many titles.

Elissa: Yes.

Lizette: You think?

Lyneshia: So many titles. Master of none.

Lizette: No, we're master of all, Lyneshia. We're master of all.

Lyneshia: That is true. I stand corrected. But we don't look this stuff up. We just do it.

Elissa: Right.

Lyneshia: It just gets done, and then we just wanted to build a sisterhood to support other women who are going through any journey that they're going through, to let them know that they're not alone and this is a platform to share your story, to share your testimony, and to help other people know there is hope, there's support, there's someone to talk to. You don't have to go through this alone. You just communicate with us; and it's kind of like a community. So, we're trying to make it like an empire almost, because we've connected with so many different people. And that's why we call it connexting. We actually call it connexting, C-O-N-N-E-X-T-I-N-G-

Elissa: Oh.

Lyneshia: -because we have just really reached out to other women and, and they have really supported us in several different ways.

So, we go out to different events. We do community cleanup. So, we do a lot of things that are based in the community. We're out of the DMV [D.C./Maryland/Virginia Metro]. So, it's been a pleasure hearing everyone's story, and hearing how they

survived and got through it with the help of another person to help them because you don't do it by yourself.

Elissa: Yeah, I love that.

Edith: Lyneshia, you've also been involved in a local theater community. What kind of things have you acted in?

Lyneshia: Oh, my goodness.

Elissa: Here comes the good stuff.

Lyneshia: What haven't I done? I've done a lot of Web series. So, I did a show called The L Boogie Spot with L. Boogie. I'm L. Boogie. I love to dance, right. So, whenever I have someone on my show and I've had a lot of producers, film writers, and people who are just doing stage plays and stuff like that, so I'll always ask. Listen, they say you have not because you ask not. And I ask for a part in their play or their movie, and lo and behold I get it.

Elissa: There you go. Just got to ask for it or it's always no.

Lyneshia: Absolutely. You have not because you ask not. So, I've just had wonderful opportunities to be a part of so many Web series. I was in Diva Wars. I was a detective. In one, I was a really mean supervisor. That was fun because that's the totally opposite of who I am. So just getting my skills up on it. The UniverSoul Circus came in on my show, and they wanted to promote that the circus was coming. And I said, "Well, you know what I want to do? I want to come out, and I want to get that crowd going. Can I, do it?" He said, "Of course." I was like, "Oh, boy."

Elissa: Oh, that's great.

Lyneshia: I'm a little nervous. But listen, I went out into that audience, and you would have thought it was a one-woman show. I just went out there, and I had a great time. And so, one of the things that I did was when he gave me tickets, I gave

it to unfortunate kids who may not have been able to make it on their own and give it to a lot of daycares and stuff like that.

So that the opportunities have been endless when it comes to having a podcast and guests on the show because you really get to step out on faith and open yourself up to new things you never really thought you would do, right? So, I just wanted to be a DJ when I first started. I just wanted to play music. But I have a gift of gab.

Elissa: You do.

Lyneshia: I have amazing networking skills, so, I would just go out and I would start asking people stuff. And then people liked to share their story. I said, "You know what, I have a platform for you to share that story on." And that's how I got a lot of my guests on my shows."

Elissa: So outside of acting and your Internet radio show, what has life been like post-treatment? How are you feeling now?

Lyneshia: It's funny that you say that because most people when they hear, "Oh, I'm in re-remission-" I don't have to worry about this ever again. No, that's not the case.

Elissa: Cancer's not over.

Lyneshia: You just have to be very conscious of what you put into your body; and mentally it has been actually great because, outside of the radio thing, I work for the school system, Prince George's County Public School System for 32 years. And I retired. I said, "This is it. I'm done, and I'm going to move on with acting and radio and podcasts." For 32 years I did what I needed to do, so from this post time, I'm going to do what I want to do because I have a whole new outlook on life, almost dying twice through this whole journey.

I now look forward to sharing my story to give people hope that you can make it through. It may be difficult at times, but there is hope that you can get through this;



and you can do this. And I felt as though the journey that I went through was to help somebody else.

And that's what I said my whole entire journey. Lord, I don't know what this is, but I'm going to trust the process and I'm going to trust you. And so, after really being able to grasp everything that has happened, everything that I went through, the feeling that I went through, the mental health that I had to really come to grips with and not trying to suppress it, but really start talking about it more, I wanted to do that more. And I think that's one of the reasons why I reached out to you all because I want to get my story out there. I want people to know that it doesn't end just because you are diagnosed with cancer. I had cancer, but cancer didn't have me.

Elissa: Exactly. You are not defined by your cancer.

Lyneshia: Right. Yeah, remission was all good and dandy; but what do I do next because there was still some regimens of the chemo that were still in your system where your hair's growing back. I love my new texture, by the way, but, you know, the hair's growing back. There's still some neuropathy in the feet. Now that's gone out of my hands. My nails are getting back to their color. When I was going through it, there were times I went to sleep and I woke up, I said, "I'm going to go to sleep, and when I wake up, this is not going to be real. This is not going to be my real reality."

And it was. You know, so coming to grips with it and then the message of being in remission, that's great. But mentally you still have flashbacks of where you were and where you are now. And where I am now, I'm grateful. I am super grateful, and I'm trying to get to speak at different events as much as I possibly can because, like I said, I definitely want to give people hope.

Elissa: Yeah, absolutely. And that is actually a great lead-in to our very last question for you.

Edith: On our patient podcast home page, we have a quote that says, "After diagnosis comes hope." Based on your cancer experience, what word would you choose to complete that sentence? "After diagnosis comes—?"

Lyneshia: A new you.

Elissa: Oh, I like it.

Lyneshia: A new you because you have made it through. You have made it through when you didn't see how you were going to get through. But you made it through. Welcome to the new you. Welcome the possibilities of new things coming your way. Try something that you haven't tried before. This is the reason why you made it through because you were living in fear before and now you can start living in faith.

Elissa: You have a second chance at life.

Lyneshia: You have a second chance at life. And when you have a second chance at life; you all thought I was something before. Listen, I'm so looking forward to this new life that it's not even funny because you have a different mindset. If I can get through this, there's absolutely nothing else I'm worried about anymore. I will not worry about anything else. There's nothing you could tell me that I can't get over since I've gotten through this.

Elissa: I love that. Well, that is a great finish to our podcast. Thank you so much, Lyneshia, for sharing your story. We love having patients come on here and share their story and share how they got through such adversity and difficulty and came out the other side and are starting to thrive in their lives again. And so, we really appreciate you. You were so fun to talk to.

Lyneshia: Oh, thank you.

Elissa: Thank you again so very much.



Elissa: And thank you to everyone listening today. The Bloodline with LLS is one part of the mission of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society to improve the quality of lives of patients and their families. To help us continue to provide the engaging content for all people affected by cancer, we would like to ask you to complete a brief survey that can be found in the show notes. This is your opportunity to provide feedback and suggested topics that will help so many people.

We would also like to know about you and how we can serve you better. This survey is completely anonymous, and no identifying information will be taken. We hope this podcast helped you today. Stay tuned for more information on the resources that LLS has for you or your loved ones who have been affected by cancer.

Have you or a loved one been affected by a blood cancer? LLS has many resources available to you – financial support, peer-to-peer connection, nutritional support, and more. We encourage patients and caregivers to contact our Information Specialists at 1-800-955-4572 or go to LLS.org/PatientSupport. You can also find information on non-Hodgkin lymphoma at LLS.org/Lymphoma. All of these links will be found in the show notes or at TheBloodline.org. Thank you again for listening. Be sure to subscribe to The Bloodline so you don't miss an episode. We look forward to having you join us next time.