

One Step Closer to Freedom

Candice Coghlin: [00:00:00] Welcome to Living Transplant. The podcast that takes you behind the scenes of the transplant program at Toronto General Hospital and brings you open and honest conversations about the transplant experience.

My name is Candice and I'm the education and outreach coordinator for the Centre for Living Organ Donation.

I'm also a kidney transplant recipient. This is where I developed my passion to support others in their journey to navigate the world of transplant.

Full disclosure. I'm not a physician and I'm not here to give you medical advice. Think of me as your guide through the world of transplant. To educate, inspire, pique your curiosity and fuel your passion.

Living Transplant will show you the world of transplant like you've seen before.

Welcome back to the Living Transplant Podcast. Today I'm joined by my friend, Tamara. We will be discussing Tamara's personal journey [00:01:00] with diabetes and her kidney pancreas transplant.

Later, we will be joined by Dr. Sharon Bray, who is a writer and a workshop developer. And recently we attended her writing your transplant story workshop, which was absolutely amazing.

So thank you so much for co-hosting this episode with me Tamara.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Thank you for having me, Candice.

Candice Coghlin: It's so exciting.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Me too.

Candice Coghlin: So I'm wondering if we can start way back in the beginning and if you can tell me a little bit about what your life was like growing up in Jamaica.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Life in Jamaica was awesome.

Like that's where you were born. That's all your family and friends. Like the environment, the warmth the, friendly people. Your school, your classmates, your neighbors. Like everybody was so kind and caring towards you. Sometimes [00:02:00] life wasn't always what you wanted to be. You think of things when you look on the TV and you see people in other countries like Canada, the US, and you're wondering and wishing, "Oh, you'd like to be there someday."

And you are always trying to do things like they do and trying to speak like they do, but it was always fun. I, do miss my country. I loved every moment of being in Jamaica.

Candice Coghlan: Talk to me a little bit about what it was like, for you at the young age you were enjoying your family and your friends and going to school and then all of a sudden you find out that you're diagnosed with type one diabetes. That must have just been so scary and life altering for somebody at your age.

It was, it really was. I remember [00:03:00] I graduated one high school. Jonathan Grant High School and then I went on to a second high school and it was at the beginning of the second high school, I started to feel really, ill. And, my mom would take me to the doctor where she would give me pills and say it's iron deficiency, but that's all I took the pills, nothing changed. So she said, "Oh, I'm gonna take you to the local clinic."

I went there and they, said, "You have to take her to the hospital right away." Then when I went there, they said it was diabetes. What is diabetes? I didn't know, because we call it sugar and I only knew that as somebody who was older to have that kind of illness, and, when they said that I didn't know, like why did I have it or how did I even get it?

But, [00:04:00] I was admitted to the hospital immediately and they said I would have to start taking insulin. So I'm like, "Okay, I'll take the insulin, then the diabetes would go away. No problem." But when they said that you'd have to take it for the rest of your life, then I was like, "No, I'm young, I'm a kid. I go to school. How can, oh, what am I supposed to do?"

So it was at that point, life got tough. Life got hard. It wasn't like being a normal kid anymore. It was a kid with responsibilities. Like everything changed. Eating, going to school sometimes I even passed out in school.

Candice Coghlin: Oh.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Yes. And, it was hard at that point, it was hard.

Candice Coghlin: And so how did you [00:05:00] manage diabetes at such a young age?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: You know what, my grandparents, my grandma, she was a rock. Yeah. And my mom and my sister was bravest of all, cuz she had to come to the hospital to learn how to give insulin so she could help me if anything goes wrong.

Candice Coghlin: Wow.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: And I would often like, "Can you gimme my insulin, please?"

She's, "Do it yourself."

"I can't even look, just do it."

Candice Coghlin: Oh.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: And then she would do it like every single day, religiously at every time I'm supposed to get insulin. I would have to call my sister and she would do.

Yeah. But, there was a little difficulty with eating, cuz even though life was nice and all of that, we didn't have it like to be spending extra money to cook extra food and because I was the only one in that household with diabetes, [00:06:00] so diet would have to change and it wasn't always easy. It ended up so that I had to eat what was cooked.

At that point, like I, wasn't on a proper diet. I just took insulin and still it, whatever was being cooked cause that's what we could afford.

Candice Coghlin: And so your sister, did she learn how to balance the food and your numbers and your insulin? Was she really, monumental in kind of keeping you healthy at that time?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: No, she wasn't. I was the one that was taught, how to do the numbers.

Candice Coghlin: Okay.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: But They taught me how to do the insulin myself. But they said just in case anything happened, there had to be someone else, but she was taught how [00:07:00] to do it on an orange. She learned on orange and then she practiced on me.

Candice Coghlin: That's fantastic. And so I'm, guessing at some point you took over giving yourself those shots.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: I did. When I got older and she couldn't, she's, "No, I'm not gonna keep sticking you in butt, your belly, your arms."

Candice Coghlin: Yeah.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: She said, "You don't know how to do it?"

I'm like, "Yes, I can. But I just want you to do it. I just can't look at me sticking myself."

She's, "what are you gonna have to learn someday." And she just said "Do it."

And I ended up taking over myself.

And, when I met my husband, he took over. So it wasn't like something I really liked doing. I know I had.

Candice Coghlin: Yeah.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: I ended up doing it for a long while by myself.

Candice Coghlin: And so you [00:08:00] bring up your husband. When did you meet your husband?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: I met my husband in 2008.

Candice Coghlin: 2008.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: 2008. I came to Canada 2007. We met in 2008 and we got married in 2010.

Candice Coghlin: So, through that time, you had immigrated to Canada after the birth of your daughter?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Yes. I had a daughter back in Jamaica.

Candice Coghlin: Yeah.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: But unfortunately, when I came to Canada, I had to leave her for a little while.

Candice Coghlin: Wow.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Which she understood and eventually everything worked out and she came soon after.

Candice Coghlin: That's fantastic. And you met your husband and you two got married.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Yes.

Candice Coghlin: And you had a beautiful son after that as well. So you [00:09:00] and your husband also had a son as well, so you had this beautiful blended family together.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Blended family. as son is older, my daughter is in the middle and our son is the last and everybody gets along really, well.

That's amazing. And so with that family dynamic, did they learn about your diabetes and, about your, disease?

Yes, they did. My daughter knew before cause I, yeah, when, I had my daughter, they took her away to be examined because I was a diabetic mother and, they kept her for a while to check her out if she had any diabetes or if anything was wrong with her she was a little bit underweight, but that was it. No diabetes. I was so, happy.

Candice Coghlin: Yeah.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: It was good. And she [00:10:00] still is good.

Candice Coghlin: Amazing.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: So is my son.

Candice Coghlin: That's fantastic. So they had a wonderful, blending of your family and, you have this great big family now in Canada. And, you've learned to manage your diabetes at this point. And then at some point your health started to decline again. And so what happened at that point?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Let me say I was pregnant and I lost the baby at seven months.

They said, they don't know why, but, there was just no heartbeat. So I, lost the baby and, yeah, after I lost the baby, then, [00:11:00] just a minute.

Candice Coghlin: Take your time. So sorry Tamara.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Yeah. Yeah, after I lost the baby, then, the doctors said to me, "We think you're diabetes and high blood pressure may have been, a source as to what caused this miscarriage." But, they weren't sure so they're like "We think you should, wait before you like get pregnant again." But it so happened that, I did get pregnant again, about a year later and, my son was fine and everything, but throughout the pregnancy, I was sick.

I was like, I was so swollen more than the average, pregnant mother. I was so [00:12:00] swollen and, the diabetes was like going crazy, like up this minute, low the next minute. And it was like just back and forth and the blood pressure was so high and it was crazy. So they said the last visit I made to, the doctor said, "If you carry on like this, then we're gonna lose you and we're gonna lose a baby. So we have to take the baby."

So I said, "Okay."

I went to Mount Sinai they said "You're not able to deliver naturalists, so we're gonna have to give you a C-section."

So I'm like, "Okay."

So I had the baby, he was fine. He was a little bit underweight, but he was good.

But I wasn't good.

Candice Coghlin: Yeah.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: I don't know. There I, got a epidural [00:13:00] and, the, puncture wound that I got started leaking.

Candice Coghlin: Oh, my goodness.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: It was leaking so bad that I had to be changing gowns and they had to be put in pads at the back of my back to, and then changing the sheets and the doctors didn't know why I was leaking so much.

But, it stopped after a few days. After a few days. And then, I came home with my baby and everything was fine and I went for a couple of checkups and they said, "Unfortunately your kidney function doesn't look good. It seems like, it's going down. It's at, I think 35%. And if it goes in a lower, we'll have to put you on dialysis."

It got lower. And they're like, "We have to move right away." [00:14:00]

So they showed me what to do. I went in for, to get like catheter in and stuff. It was peritoneal dialysis at first that I did at home at nights, because I had to go to school in the morning.

I was going to George Brown.

Candice Coghlin: So you're going to George Brown.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Yes.

Candice Coghlin: You have a new baby. And a daughter at home. And you're now starting peritoneal dialysis, while having diabetes as well.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: I did my dialysis at night and in the morning I would rush off to school and come back home and do the same thing.

But my husband would get home before me and he would start dinner and do his stuff. Until one, one evening, I started complaining of headaches. So he said, "Just go take a shower, wash off and see if you'll feel a little bit [00:15:00] better." I went into the shower and then I started to call him and told him that I can't see.

He's like, "What do you mean you can't see?"

So he came in the washroom and got me and realized that I was feeling around saying, "I can't see."

So that got him real nervous now. So he took me to the hospital.

Candice Coghlin: Of course.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Yeah. And they said, it was getting late and he, they said "We have to run some tests on her and I don't think we're gonna let her out cuz she doesn't look good. I think her diabetes is very, high and the blood pressure is also very high."

And he said before he left me at the hospital, I was curled up in a ball in the fetal position.

And he was scared to leave me, but he left the kids at home. So he left me for the night and he came home.

Candice Coghlin: At that point, you have no idea [00:16:00] what happened to you?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: No, I didn't.

Candice Coghlin: Your eyesight is completely gone at this point.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: It was going and coming.

Candice Coghlin: Wow.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Diabetes. It affects every organ in your, it started with my eyes up to this day, I'm still getting injections in my eyes.

Yeah. It affects everything if it's not taken care of.

Candice Coghlin: So you're in hospital and they're trying to figure out what's going on. Were they able to find the source of what happened?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: The night that I went in, they actually called, my husband the following morning saying that he needs to come right away because I was having seizures. I've never had seizures before.

Candice Coghlin: Oh my goodness.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: I was having seizures. And when he came, he said they were, giving me chest compressions and I had a heart attack. [00:17:00] I don't know, it's mind blowing to me in my report, it says I was resuscitated fifty-two times. I don't even.

Candice Coghlin: Fifty-two times?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Yeah. I have no idea how that happens and how I'm still here.

Candice Coghlin: Somebody, he wanted to keep you here, obviously.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Obviously, and I'm glad I'm here.

Candice Coghlin: Yeah.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Yeah. There was a lot of things that happened in that hospital that only he can tell me about because he was there every minute of the day, every day that I was there.

Candice Coghlin: And at this point, you're not knowing what's going on. You're in a coma at this point?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Yes. I was in the ICU for eight weeks, two months. I was in the ICU and, some sometimes when he tells me some things, it's what he remembers. Cuz he doesn't remember them straight out but he'd tell me [00:18:00] things and I'd like, "I did that? That happened?"

And he would say "Yes." Cuz I have no idea.

Yes. So I was in there for, in the hospital for a total of four months.

Candice Coghlin: And so you, woke up from your coma, not knowing that any of this has happened and you've gone through all of these incredible traumas to your body and your family is hoping and praying that you come out of this, and so you do, but you, wake up on hemodialysis now?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Yes. I didn't even know when they changed me from the PD to hemodialysis. I guess it was easier to do it in the hospital. But when I, asked "What was this thing in my chest?"

Candice Coghlin: Yeah.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: They explained to me that, "We had to change your [00:19:00] dialysis because you're in the hospital now, and this is the easiest way to get it done."

And I think that they thought it was the best type of dialysis at that time, too.

Candice Coghlin: And so when you woke up, what were you thinking? Did, you go from remembering, trying to find your way out of the shower to missing that part of what happened?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: I have no idea. I didn't, I, I remember the headache and going in the shower and going to the hospital that night. I think that was it. I don't remember anymore.

I remember when I woke up, though, my husband was there and I was asking like, "Who are you?"

"It was, what?"

Yeah, because they told me that I wasn't gonna be able to remember anything at all, not even as a child. I wouldn't be able to remember to be able to function.

Candice Coghlin: [00:20:00] And so when did that start coming back?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: I would say maybe a couple weeks after. It didn't take a long time. Yeah.

Candice Coghlin: And so was that, bits and pieces that started to come back into place or did it all come at once?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: It all came back, it all came back. But I know when I left the hospital, this was in February, the end of January, February, and we had bought new furniture, in December, so when I came out of the hospital and came home, I was like, "This is where I live? Where did this come from?" Cause I didn't remember that we had gotten new stuff.

Candice Coghlin: So it was like coming home to a new place?

You went through this incredible journey in the hospital that [00:21:00] your husband was running back and forth between your children and, checking up on you and making sure you were okay, how did he manage through that time?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: There were two persons that spoke to him. One was, a gentleman that lives downstairs. He said to him, they call him Robbie sometimes. He says, "Robbie you can't do this. Running from work, going to your wife at the hospital. And the children you're at home. You're gonna run down yourself."

And he said, "You know what? You're right."

He left his job. He said, "I have to, I, I have to look after my family."

the next person that spoke to him was a doctor at the hospital. The doctor took him aside and he said, "I know you, you love your wife and your here [00:22:00] every single day. We all know you but you have to take care of yourself. Or else you're gonna get sick. You won't be able to take care of her and you won't be able to take care of your kids. So you slow down just a little bit."

He didn't slow down a lot, but he, kinda slow down a little.

Candice Coghlin: And I think that is very good advice for caregivers through their journey is, you can't take care of someone else if, you can't take care of yourself first.

And I find that with my mom, she was helping take care of me. Like, your husband learned about peritoneal dialysis., My mom did the same. She was supporting me while I was doing my peritoneal dialysis. So she learned all about the machine. And she was bringing me [00:23:00] back and forth from appointments and my dialysis in center.

And at the time my grandmother was living with MS, with multiple sclerosis in, so she had a lot of appointments as well. And to take care of yourself as a caregiver is so difficult because you are that core person for the one who is sick and you want to do everything to make sure that they're okay. But if you're not okay yourself, you can't take care of that person.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Yes.

Candice Coghlin: And I think that's so important and it's, I think it's one of the most difficult things for somebody who's caring for a loved one to realize is that they do have to take that time to make sure they're healthy too.

So you finally, are, back home. You're able to get home and are at this point, are you doing in center hemodialysis now?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Yes. I had to go to the hospital [00:24:00] three days per week and I was using a walker at that time, cuz I couldn't walk by myself.

Yeah. I had to learn to walk again. My legs were so weak. Even now walking is a problem for me to go upstairs and it's a problem, but my legs were so weak.

I came out of the hospital in a wheelchair. had to use a wheelchair back and forth to dialysis for a while, until I moved on to a walker and then I moved on to a cane.

Candice Coghlin: And so how long was that, that you were not able to have strength in your legs to, to walk on your own?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: I was practicing daily, but it was very difficult. Everything was for a couple of months.

The wheelchair was like, about a month. [00:25:00] But the walker, it was like maybe three months. And then to the cane, it was like, I used it if I had to go for a walk in the hallway just to exercise or anything like that, I would take my cane with me.

Candice Coghlin: Wow.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Yeah. Everything was for a couple of months before I regained strength. And as I said before, the strength still isn't there. To go upstairs, I have to hold on and pull myself up. It's it's still bad, but I'm still fighting.

Candice Coghlin: And that's the thing everything that I hear from you is, you fight so hard and you're so strong and you've gotten through things that most people could never imagine that they would ever face one of them. What keeps you going? And what kept you pushing forward and kept you positive and strong through all [00:26:00] of that?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: I pray a lot and I prayed a lot until I met my husband. I started praying more because, we, believe in God and what we pray for are good things and healing and strength.

And I believe that God hears and he sees where we need help and he steps in. And, I don't think I, I could have made it without God giving me the strength and giving my husband the strength. Like he knew nothing about anything. And I think that with me, just telling him wasn't enough, it's like he hears the voice say, "Listen, you need to do this. You need to be strong. You need to." and that [00:27:00] gives him the extra push to go ahead that he needs to.

And, I love my family so, much. I love my kids. I love their I, can't say his stepson. I have to say his son. A older, person, not older person, but he's not a young kid. But I have to say he's still my son and he has a daughter. And, now I'm a grandma and she loves her Pop-Pop and and we are just so blessed to have found each other and, they keep me strong. I love my, mom is still alive. My father is still alive and my grandparents. All my uncles and aunties.

We now are reading from one of our workshops participants, Elena. Go ahead.

Candice Coghlan: [00:28:00] and now welcome back to the show.

Candice Coghlin: You're on this journey of hemodialysis and, you've gotten home and you've gotten to a place where, you're stable now. When did [00:29:00] the, discussion even about transplant come up?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: It was one day at, dialysis where the, I think she was a transplant coordinator. It was all of this was at Humber River Hospital.

Candice Coghlin: Okay.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: And, they referred me to Toronto General. And, that, that saved my life.

But she told me about the transplant program and I'm like, I'm very interesting, but what are my chances?"

And she's, "You have to go on a list."

I'm like, "Okay. A list. If I go on now, I'm gonna be at the bottom, but okay. Put me at the bottom. It's fine. As long as I'm on the list." And I was on the list.

Shortly after I came out the hospital, I got a call.

I'm like, "Can it work so [00:30:00] fast?"

But when I went to the hospital and I did my checkup and stuff, they were like, "No, I'm sorry, you're too weak. Oh. And things aren't stable with your body."

And I'm like "I totally understand." I'm not gonna say I, I wasn't disappointed.

Candice Coghlin: Of course.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: But I do understand because after all that I've been through in the hospital, I still wasn't able to function properly on my own as yet. So I do understand what they said. My body wasn't strong enough. That was it.

Went back, continued doing my dialysis. I think it was about another year or so. I got another call, but this time they said, we have a kidney." I was being worked up for a kidney and a pancreas. So they said "I have a kidney. Would you [00:31:00] wanna get the kidney? And then later on, when we find a pancreas, then you get another transplant?"

I'm like, I've been through a lot and I know pain, but that doesn't mean I like pain." So that would be, two surgeries. And I'm like, "Oh."

I didn't wanna say no, but I'm like, "If I say no, would it mean that I don't wanna get a transplant?" But, I, I was going around and she's "It's okay. You can say, no. We understand if you wanna do both at once."

And I said, "Okay, that make me feels much better."

Candice Coghlin: Yeah.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: "I would rather do both at once."

Candice Coghlin: So doing both at once, what would that what, does that do for you? If you were to get a kidney and a pancreas?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: It would mean that I would have one surgery. And it would also means that no more dialysis, no more diabetes.

Candice Coghlin: Wow.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: And yeah, because [00:32:00] since the, initial state of having diabetes, having been on insulin for 20, was about 25 years I've been in insulin.

Until the third call, I got worked up and everything and they're like, "You're good to go."

I'm like.

"Everything is good?"

And they're like, "Yeah."

And I'm like, "Whoa, it's finally gonna happen."

And that day, when I got the transplant the day before was the last day I took insulin after 20 plus years. Such a relief.

Candice Coghlin: That's incredible. And so you go through the transplant, you get a kidney and a pancreas, and it's a successful transplant.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: It was successful. I woke up and I was smiling. I was in pain, but I opened my [00:33:00] eyes. And when the nurse said, "Everything went well."

Oh my gosh. And then when they check your, urine bag, because I'm like, "Is that my pee?"

When you're on dialysis, you don't do that. You can't pee. And I was on dialysis for five years.

Is that all mine? And she's like, "Yes." I've never been so excited to see my pee before.

Candice Coghlin: What I always say is liquid gold.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Oh my goodness. It was so exciting.

Candice Coghlin: That's incredible. And it's, it's, funny thinking about those huge moments for us as dialysis patients, that pee is just something that happens and just comes out of people's bodies until it doesn't work anymore for us. And

having to have fluid removed on dialysis and live with liquid restrictions and all of those things that we go through, to wake [00:34:00] up and see a bag hanging off of your bed full of urine.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Oh my goodness.

Candice Coghlin: A cause for celebration.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: That was awesome to see that.

Candice Coghlin: And so other than your pee, how did you feel that day seeing your husband and knowing that this was the end of your dialysis journey ?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: It felt so good.

Candice Coghlin: Yeah.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: It felt, it's something that you can't describe, like that feeling, like a weight has been lifted, Candice. You don't know how there's, not enough words to say how you feel, how you felt before to how you're feeling now and know that your life is gonna be changed forever now, for the better.[00:35:00]

You're looking like before you were looking, but you didn't know where you were going. You were just looking ahead, but now you can actually look at it head and see, which way do I wanna go, right? Which way do I wanna, which way do I choose to go? You could only go one way straight. But you have multiple ways, which way do you wanna go? You can go anywhere. You wanna go. Like it's awesome. It was.

Candice Coghlin: And so one of my favorite things to ask people, especially since you're, you were diabetic and on dialysis, did you have a food that you ate right away that you were so excited to eat post transplant?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: What Candice? I ate everything. I ate everything. There was no partial. Like I just ate, And then when I had enough I'm like, "That's okay. It's okay."

Candice Coghlin: Amazing. [00:36:00] Yeah. I ate a lot of chili post transplant. We couldn't have tomatoes and beef is salty and no beans or lentils. And so like a bowl of chili was basically like everything you shouldn't eat on dialysis.

My husband was laughing because once I got home, I made giant things of chili, like huge, big pots that would feed a high school football team. And I would just keep doing it. And I did it for about three weeks. I just ate so much chili because I was like, "These are all the things I couldn't eat before. And now I can! I have this freedom, to do this!"

Tamara Hartley-Harris: I know.

Candice Coghlin: And it's incredible. Like you said, there's no words to describe what it feels like to have that opportunity now in front of us, and that freedom and being [00:37:00] disconnected from a machine and knowing that you no longer literally have a tube, that's connecting you to a machine to, that's true to keep you alive. It's incredible.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Incredible feeling. You feel so, so free. So, ugh, so good.

Candice Coghlin: Absolute joy.

And I know you went through the process of eventually writing a letter to your donor family. How did that process go for you?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: It took me a while. Took me a while because you don't get much information about the person whose organs you get. But what I did know was that I got both organs from the same person.

So that would've mean that the person was deceased, and I felt happy knowing that I'm alive, but sad [00:38:00] that a person had to die. And that, it set me back a bit. It took me a while before I could write that letter. Because I don't know if writing that letter would make, the donor's family, bring up back memories or, maybe say that, oh, they don't want the letter because you are alive, but my family's dead or I don't know, any resentment. I didn't wanna stir any, feelings that they were trying to, or if they had gotten over it to bring it back up.

I tried many times and I put it away. It didn't take a lot of convincing, but it was one day on our ACB YouTube channel program that we spoke [00:39:00] about it. And I said that I wanted to write it, but I didn't have the courage, and then, you guys told me about some of the stories and, that gave me a little bit of confidence and I did write that letter and I did send it off. And, I feel relieved that I did. I am not, disappointed that I did. And I'm not disappointed that I didn't hear back because, whether they choose to or not, I just want them to

know how grateful I am. And once they know that, that's, important to me. I just wanna tell them, thank you.

And thank you for giving me a second chance and thank you for, your kind [00:40:00] donation and how much it has affected me and giving me so much more. And I just wanted to see thank, you to them.

Candice Coghlin: Amazing. That's incredible.

Please now enjoy a reading from one of our workshop participants, Sheila.

Candice Coghlan: and now welcome back to the show

Candice Coghlin: I know that, for a lot of us, writing our story about what happened can be really difficult and it's often hard for us to even know where to start. And we were able [00:41:00] to attend, the two of us, Writing Your Transplant Story Workshop that helped kickstart that journey for the two of us. And I'd like to ask Sharon to join us.

Dr. Sharon Bray: Tamara, what a story? What a story. Wow. I'm just humbled.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Thank you so much.

Candice Coghlin: It is our great pleasure today to introduce you to Dr. Sharon Bray, who was our fearless writing leader. Sharon is a writer, educator, and author of two books on the benefit of expressive writing during cancer, as well as personal essays, a children's book magazines and the occasional poetry.

Sharon was the one who led us in our workshop for Writing Your Transplant Story, which Tamara and I participated in and we were very lucky to be [00:42:00] joined by several other women in the group who were both donors and, recipients. And throughout that process, we were transformed by the power of writing and we're so grateful that we have Sharon here today to join us. So thank you. Welcome Sharon.

Dr. Sharon Bray: Thank you so much. I appreciate being here. And I also have to say, I appreciated very much being able to lead a group for transplant patients and recipients, because it was a new aspect of illness and health that I had not been acquainted with before and it was inspirational and humbling at once. So I'm so happy that I was part of this.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Sharon, can you talk to us a little bit about your personal journey and what brought you to writing?

Dr. Sharon Bray: I can, but understand, I have to go back many years.
[00:43:00]

Candice Coghlin: We're with you.

Dr. Sharon Bray: Okay. It was a long time ago in the Dawn of time, but I've pretty much written since I was a kid.

I got in the habit of carrying a little notebook with me. One of those cheap little spiral bound small. I liked to write in purple ink in my early years. And my writing was about, I was a very contemplative kid and my writing was a place for me to record deep thoughts. I was exploring myself growing up. I was exploring what I believed in and why and it just became a very important thing for me. I didn't share it with anybody. It was just mine and that was the beginning.

I turned to writing an earnest [00:44:00] again, several years later when my first husband died suddenly in a drowning accident and suddenly I found myself mother of two children. I was back in graduate school, earning a doctorate and my whole world changed.

Candice Coghlin: My goodness.

Dr. Sharon Bray: And I began to fill journals. They were an important aspect of release, of making sense of the experience, but also I was protecting my children with their grief and for me to show a mixture of feelings and I had them believe me, I was angry at times because the death was an unnecessary accident.

I was full of grief that I couldn't express to the girls because they were already suffering so much.

I wrote and I wrote and I wrote and it was the very best thing I did for [00:45:00] myself up to a point. One of the things I say to people and, all the research on expressive writing says this too. "When writing is healing, if you find yourself ruminating going down the same rabbit hole," and I started to of course replay the same questions that were unanswerable over and over, I started feeling worse. And so of course, I didn't think it was me. I thought it was my daughter's grief. So I took them off to a child psychologist who played with

them, met with us, watched me in action with them and finally delivered the verdict, which was the girls are fine. The, they're grieving. They need to grieve your parenting skills are good.

And I said, "Why do I feel so bad?"

And he said, "I think Mommy needs to talk."

Candice Coghlin: Yeah.

Dr. Sharon Bray: So Mommy finally did start talking with a therapist for two years, but I continued to write during therapy.[00:46:00]

I started writing poems about what I thought was the therapeutic relationship, but of course it was about my relationship with my husband, life to death. And so I found that my writing began to take a shape. I started writing poetry. I didn't just free write all the time. I had other ways that I started to express the experience and I've written ever since.

I write every morning, it's an active meditation. It's an active release. It's my spiritual, my spiritual activity.

Candice Coghlin: Incredible. Wow. And that must have been such a whirlwind for you of, it's not a disease diagnosis, but it almost feels like a similar situation, where you're smacked in the face with something that was not supposed to happen. And now you are [00:47:00] being put through a situation that you have to deal with and you can't just survive. You have to be a mother to your daughters and make sure that they're okay. And they, their lives can continue. And often I find mothers put their children before themselves. And so with the writing, outside of writing what, else did you do to keep yourself afloat during those years?

Dr. Sharon Bray: I did the things I love most, and I sort of spared no expense. What I had in my budget for the doctoral work at that point, was limited. But I took the girls to concerts. I took them to ballet. I enrolled them in dance lessons, and next thing I knew, I enrolled in dance lessons at their dance [00:48:00] school. And I danced in the dance show too.

And we did a lot of, this kind of activity. Teenagers were hard because some of that anger, and it was directed at me. Of course I was the only surviving parent had nowhere to go but we made it through it. And I'm happy to say that both my

daughters are mothers accomplished, creative and I think all the better in their relationships with other people because of what they went through.

They still remember their father with a mixture of great love and sorrow, but I remarried about nine years later and John had never had children and it was interesting between the three of them, how they worked out the relationship. There were some [00:49:00] pretty comic moments, but it's developed into a wonderful relationship. He loves them dearly. They love him dearly. And who could ask for more? And my younger daughter danced all through, into her early adulthood. She did classical ballet. She did jazz. She was very talented and then danced professionally in a salsa group. They did acrobatic things I don't even wanna think about. I'm sure it ruined her body. She now can't dance, but, it was just joyful activity for us.

Friends would come over to dinner and we'd have routines.

Candice Coghlin: Amazing.

Dr. Sharon Bray: We laughed a lot. I, humor is one of the things that laughter's important to me and not contrive jokes, but just naturally bubbling up [00:50:00] out of just everyday life. And they both have a great sense of humor.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: That's nice. That's good.

Sharon why do you think that writing is healing and, do you know of any research that, backs that up?

Dr. Sharon Bray: Personally, just in terms of what I told you, I understood that writing was at the very least therapeutic. Not all writing, however, is healing. And I'll talk a little bit about that.

What inspired me was, back in 2000, early 2000, I was diagnosed with very early stage cancer, very treatable. But at the time I was an unhappy executive. I was miserable in what I was doing. And in some ways I feel like cancer saved me. It's a crazy thing to say, perhaps, except that, I'd gone [00:51:00] to see the radiologist and he'd asked what I was doing for myself, cuz I was talking about, "Oh, I'm trying to downsize an organization and my daughters and da, da, da."

And he stopped me and he put his hand on my knee and he said, "Sharon, I think you need to take care of yourself." It was almost a repeat from the child psychologist from many years before saying, "You need to take care of yourself."

I started back to the office and I pulled off the freeway midway called the chair, chairman of the board for the organization I was managing and said, "I'm resigning."

I said, "If I don't. I can't save this organization."

I said, "But if I don't stop and take care of myself, I can't save myself."

Candice Coghlin: Wow.

Dr. Sharon Bray: And so that summer I immersed myself [00:52:00] in writing and what I discovered and what happened was I was, I took a role as an interim executive director of a cancer group, a cancer support group.

And someone put a magazine on my desk, Ma'am Magazine. I remember and I opened it and found an article by a psychologist name of James Pennebaker, University of Texas at Austin. He was doing research, significant research on the healing aspects of writing. And what brought him to that was his own personal experience, but subsequently he did experiments with the college students he was teaching and then gradually it took hold. And now other populations, cancer patients, heart patients, arthritis patients, children with cancer, Vietnam, vets, Iran, vets, it goes on and on. [00:53:00] Studying the impact of what he called expressive writing. That's 30 plus years ago that he started that research. There's a significant body of research that supports the healing benefits of what he termed expressive writing.

So that's why I say not all writing is healing. What is expressive writing? It's pretty specific. It's writing about your deepest feelings and thoughts. It's about telling the truth. It's about writing freely. You don't go back and edit and do those things. It's simply a release.

And in that way, it's very much like talk therapy, more Rogerian perhaps than other therapies. To simply be able to express, and dump it on the page. The page does not talk back to you by saying, "Yeah, you're using too [00:54:00] many of the same action verbs."

It doesn't say that. It simply says, "Okay, let me have it." and then it's up to you. To read it over.

I ask my, when I work with writing groups, I recommend that people read over what they've written later. Underline phrases and words that stand out and use

those as triggers to writing the next day or the day after that. But expressive writing is really writing therapy.

That research is fascinating. I will say I haven't had much. I haven't found because I went searching. When I found out I was leading the transplant group. I have not found much in the way of expressive writing experiments, done with transplant patients. I think that's one of the areas where probably there could be some more. [00:55:00]

Candice Coghlin: Amazing. And after seeing that magazine and reading about that research, is that what prompted you to start these workshops?

Dr. Sharon Bray: All the lights went on, all the lights went on. My love of writing, my, my educational background and training, my teaching and my desire that I've had ever since I was a kid, right? A big, deep thoughts is to do meaningful work.

Managing an organization for me was not meaningful work. It is for some, not for me. When I was in grade six, I thought I would be a minister.

When I would grew up there weren't many women in the field in terms of the Protestant world. I know that, but I thought that's what I want to do, but it's that spiritual side of me that needed to be expressed.

I just felt like [00:56:00] I, I was being called vocare, a vocation. This was work I wanted to do. And shortly after I finished my cancer treatment, I proposed to the new director of the cancer organization I'd been covering for, to let me try an experiment was simply, I said, "Free, I don't charge. I would like to lead a writing group for breast cancer patients."

And that was 2001. And I have never stopped since. I still lead groups for cancer patients. And I think it's important for me to come at this work with lived experience of serious illness. And I came with cancer and then I'm a heart patient. I also, the last three ,years have been a started through Ted Rogers Center for Heart [00:57:00] Research. The same expressive writing group for heart patients and now transplant.

So it's been 21 years of just absolute joy in what I do. I never get tired of it. The stories always inspire me. I'm always humbled by them. I learn things about myself, just in the way I react to those stories as well.

Just like when I've taught grade school, back in the Dawn of time, my, my kids were my greatest teachers. And my work has changed. And I changed in the way that I do certain things.

Not because anybody told me I should change. It's because when you're doing this work, you're in constant dialogue with the people in the group, their stories, their needs, and it has to be relevant to that group. There's no [00:58:00] prescription. My workshops don't have a set at, I don't have a curriculum. I have a thousand ideas that I pull from depending what the makeup of the group is, if that makes any sense.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Yeah, it does. Sharon, your chronic illness that you had, how do you think that it helped you to navigate through this world and with your writing experience?

Dr. Sharon Bray: I think one of the things I understood, when I began to write and perhaps it was more about the experience of writing when my husband died, than it was about the cancer experience because once I started leading groups, it's a constant dialogue. I reflect on the group. Also on my own experience and on the writing itself. So it's a very, [00:59:00] when I did my doctorate, I was looking at, the thinking that instructors did during instruction.

And I modeled the work after Donald Schon's work on reflective practice, which I still have that weather beaten book on my shelves all these years later, but that's how we grow expertise. Expertise is through reflection. It's a constant dialogue between yourself and your work. Yourself and your work.

And so when I would write for myself, I would reread it. I would notice things that surprised me in it. would notice other things that seemed to be quite trivial. I would stumble into insight if you like ,and that was the big healing [01:00:00] aspect for me. And now I do the same process with my work, as I said. So much depends on the group and whatever the group is going through. I think about that, I choose the prompts, the exercises, I go back, more things come out of the group. I might shift gears completely depending on what I'm hearing and feeling and sensing in the group. It's a constant interaction, for me.

Candice Coghlin: One thing that I found very difficult to write about, which I wasn't expecting to happen during our series was when you asked us to simply write about the experience of waiting, and for me, that was such a heavy space that I lived in when I went from my diagnosis to transplant, that was [01:01:00] my waiting space. And it was a very difficult place to go back to. And I didn't expect that to happen during our series.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Now we'll have another reading from Candice's mom. Her name is Kim. Go ahead, Kim.

Kim: Waiting is brutal. Your mind can run amok.

Is everything going to work out?

Each test was one step closer to giving my daughter a kidney, one step closer to freedom for my precious daughter who had been stuck to a machine for the past year.

Waiting taught me to trust in divine timing.

It taught me patience and knowing.

I had a knowing deep in me that all was going to work out the way it did.

God only knows what would've happened if it didn't.

We are so, so lucky.

Lucky we were a fabulous match.

Lucky she's free.

Waiting is such a difficult time, but would we be this grateful without the wait?

Maybe waiting helps us to process the actual event as we wait.

Waiting [01:02:00] creates faith or fear - probably a bit of both.

Waiting is trying to stay in the present, hold hope for the future, but try not to let the future take away this day we've been given.

Waiting is not the same for the patient and the donor. She had to wait for the freedom from a machine.

I was waiting for confirmation of what I already knew.

Our bodies were built for this exchange and waiting was part of the process.

The wait at times was bearable because we'd talk about life after dialysis, dreams, the future, travel plans, swimming without a tube, no more dumping into a gas bucket.

The wait was a story that we were writing.

In the wait everything was possible.

The wait was difficult for our whole family.

They had to wait for two of their loved ones to come through a transplant.

I can only imagine the wait our family experienced.

At least we were together in the wait.

Candice Coghlan: And now welcome back to the show

Candice Coghlin: Do you find that those hardships that people go through really help to breed creativity?

Dr. Sharon Bray: I think we have a lot of [01:03:00] literary evidence about that. Henry James, English novelist, when back in the 1800s hundreds said once that, Every writer begins from a port of pain."

and William Carlos Williams, the American doctor who practiced in up in, up until the, about the 1950s was also a poet, but he also talked about the way writing begins out of illness out of stress.

If you read poetry, anybody in my group knows that I love poetry, but it's a shorthand way to emotion. Where do the poets get that inspiration? Not by sitting and observing yes, observing others, but it starts here first. It starts in the heart. It starts in one's own experience. And out of that, [01:04:00] we surprise ourselves.

I hear extraordinary writing in these groups from people who will say to me at the beginning of the group, "I don't really write," because we have this notion that writing is about genius and novels and poetry and creativity. It's not, it's about expression. It's about telling the truth of your experience. It's writing from the heart and the soul, and anyone can write and say something absolutely beautiful, anyone. That's my philosophy, anyway.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: What would be your advice to, maybe, just anyone who wants to start writing?

Dr. Sharon Bray: Spend time choosing a notebook [01:05:00] that you really like. That's one for me.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Special color ink.

Dr. Sharon Bray: And even your color ink. I no longer right in purple, but I have to say, I much prefer black ink over blue. It just happened. And a certain kind of pen that I use. You can get your little fetishes about your writing.

Candice Coghlin: Yeah.

Dr. Sharon Bray: The point is, it, this is important work. It's your story, your feelings, your experiences, and is, and you are maybe you will write the great Canadian novel. Maybe you will write a blockbuster memoir, but that's not why you write not initially you write to hear yourself. You write to free up all the possibilities for self-expression and beauty. I think that we all have in this.

You notice not just things in yourself, [01:06:00] but I notice things that absolutely take my breath away just looking out the window sometimes, and that can be a prompt. You can get up in the morning, you've got the same old coffee cup you've had for 30 years. It's got a crack in it, but you love this thing. That coffee cup has stories. Tell them. So I think I'll lost track of your question Tamara.

Candice Coghlin: No, that's fantastic. Yeah.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Great answer to what I asked.

Dr. Sharon Bray: Okay, good.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Yeah.

Dr. Sharon Bray: I have such enthusiasm. I get carried away.

Candice Coghlin: That's what we love. That's what we love about Sharon. Yeah. And, you spoke to something that I always wonder as well before I started our workshop was what, how do I start? Like what, is the prompt that if I sit down in the morning, like you say, every morning you write and before this

workshop, it seemed like such a scary [01:07:00] thing to do because you have a blank page in front of you, whether it's on the computer or if it's in a notebook and thinking about just that first word is hard for people. And so you've given us some examples, but do you have any more examples for people, to prompt, just to get things flowing and to start before they even think about writing their transplant story or writing about themselves?

Dr. Sharon Bray: One of the, my favorite poets, William Stafford had very simple advice for writing his first. He had defined a writer as, "a writer is someone who writes period." But he talked every morning. He would get up at 3:00 AM and he, accomplished incredible volumes of poetry that are so down to earth and [01:08:00] accessible and wonderful. But you know that you, just say, oh, he was such a wise man, but he would get up every morning at 3:00 AM. And go into his study and lie back on his sofa. And he talked about laying a line across the page and then following it.

When I get up in the morning and I start writing, now it's the elaborate ritual. I make my coffee fresh ground. I have all these things in place. The dog is at my feet. We're ready. Okay. Ready? Camera start writing. But I just start somewhere and it doesn't really matter where.

I can start with the weather or I very often start with the first thing in the morning is to write a haiku, which I had new folks write. Seventeen simple syllables, three lines. [01:09:00] That just says, "here's where I am today. Here's what I'm noticing today." That will take me into myself.

But if you're absolutely at a loss for anything to write, there's a bazillion, all you need is a prompt. And I recommend if you're writing from prompts that you use a timer and you commit to when the timer starts, you start writing anything and you keep that pin moving until the timer goes off.

What happens when you're under pressure with the timer is you just start writing and you don't know what you say. Go back, read it. There will be nuggets in there that now become your own prompt for writing.

But I have a bazillion prompts, where have they come from? They've, you know, I started with some that I got from one or two writers I loved or studied with of their prompts, but very quickly, because I was [01:10:00] now doing a slightly different kind of writing with people, going through life threatening diseases, it began to change.

Where my prompts have come from is from the group. From understanding their experience and waiting for transplant patients, huge, and there's so much in that story of waiting. Diagnosis. There's another one hearing for the first time as Tamara told us in her story, you need a transplant. You have cancer. Guess what, Sharon, your heart's failing. The shock of that.

Yes, we know we aren't gonna live forever effort, but suddenly it's, "wait a minute. I'm not ready. I'm not this. No, not now." And [01:11:00] out of that experience is extraordinary writing the emotions of it, the experience of it the, medical experience, writing about that, having the freedom, if you have bad experiences with physicians or medical staff to actually write about it.

Anatole Broyard was a literary critic who died of prostate cancer. And he spent a whole chapter in his book called Intoxicated by My Illness, a whole chapter examining his physician.

Candice Coghlin: Oh.

Dr. Sharon Bray: And he said 'It wasn't that he was bad. fine, but I wish that he had A little bit of humor. I wish that he would read my poetry from time to time. I wish he had grope for my spirit instead of my prostate.'

It was.

Candice Coghlin: Yeah.

Dr. Sharon Bray: To have the freedom to express the truth of your [01:12:00] experience on paper. So out of the medical experience comes emotions, fears hearing the diagnosis, waiting waiting for transplant, waiting for treatment in the cancer community, waiting to get back as I have all month long, the results of a test to see if I qualify for particular intervention in my heart failure. The waiting is a killer.

Candice Coghlin: It is.

Dr. Sharon Bray: It's terrible.

Candice Coghlin: Yeah.

Dr. Sharon Bray: And the emotions you feel during that period are all over the map so all of those experiences can be turned into prompts. Sometimes

gratitude is a really important one. Simply to write about what you're grateful for, because I think in the midst of illness and hardship, we lose sight.

Candice Coghlin: We do.

Dr. Sharon Bray: And yet we know that there's plenty of [01:13:00] research that a gratitude practice, simply I write every day, try to write three to five things I'm grateful for at the end of my writing time. And sometimes I scrape the barrel a little bit because I'm fresh outta gratitude and I really have to.

Candice Coghlin: Right.

Dr. Sharon Bray: Come up with something and I do, and I re it helps me remember, "Wait a minute, sweetheart. You're doing fine. Your life is full. You have so much to be grateful for." And that's healing.

Candice Coghlin: Absolutely.

Dr. Sharon Bray: It's healing.

Candice Coghlin: And for you Tamara, for you, was there a prompt that Sharon gave us that you found either difficult to do? Like, the waiting one was very difficult for me to not so much write, but to experience as I was writing it. Or was there one that even the opposite that you felt was just so [01:14:00] delicious to get out? It just felt good to express that?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: I, the one that I really loved was, I, with the waiting one I wrote, but I, couldn't stop. And that was, that was too long to read. So I didn't read that day. But, the one that I love is, the one that, when she, the prompt that she gave us saying, how we wanted to be remembered.

Candice Coghlin: Yes.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: I like that one very much.

Candice Coghlin: I'm wondering, do you have that one in front of you? Would you be willing to read it for us?

Dr. Sharon Bray: Sometimes it's fun to read what you wrote in a five minute prompt against what you wrote more on later. Just, but it, those little prompts

that short time opens you up. But you, never finish in a five minute to seven minute writing prompt. Never.[01:15:00]

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Okay. Yes. I would like to share the one that, says how I want to be remembered and I wrote, "I want to be remembered as a sweetest, kindest, funniest mom. Oftentimes my kids would say that they wonder if anybody else's mom dances with them and sings and tells jokes and hugs them and squeezes them as tightly as me. No, would often be my response.

I want to be remembered as a wife who loves her husband, who is incredible. He loves and works hard for his family and is a true man of prayer and strong faith.

I want to be remembered as a kind and caring, strong and smart and not too bad on the eyes. I want to be remembered as a survivor of diabetes at 16 [01:16:00] years old in high school a survivor of kidney disease. Which kept me on dialysis for five years. A survivor of art disease which led me to heart attack and also to come out of a two month coma where they said, I wouldn't remember anything.

I want to be remembered as an author, a storyteller, who wrote about her whole ordeal about what she has been through and how I overcame, and also as one who loves and believes in God and in prayers."

That's what I wrote.

Dr. Sharon Bray: Thank you, Tamara. It's lovely to hear it again.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Thank you.

Candice Coghlin: Absolutely beautiful.

Absolutely beautiful. So thank you so much, both of you for sharing your stories and talking about our workshop that we did, before we leave, [01:17:00] I have a question to ask both of you that is not transplant related. So I'm gonna ask Sharon first, Sharon if you were a tree, what kind of tree would you be?

Dr. Sharon Bray: A weeping willow.

Candice Coghlin: Amazing.

Dr. Sharon Bray: I dunno, any trees that last. But what I, my, my aunt years and years ago had immigrated to the United States from France. And, she, they planted on their farm, this wonderful weeping willow. When she came to the country, that by the time I saw it as a youngster, it was this huge, beautiful embracing, you could walk in. And you've just felt embraced by this wonderful weeping willow. And I don't see many here.

Candice Coghlin: Yeah.

Dr. Sharon Bray: They aren't, good for the water main system, but.

Candice Coghlin: Right.

Dr. Sharon Bray: But I [01:18:00] love, and that would be my tree of choice.

Candice Coghlin: Amazing. That's beautiful. I love those. They're absolutely stunning. And yourself Tamara, what kind of tree would you be?

Tamara Hartley-Harris: You might find this a little bit funny. Do you know the tropical food mangoes?

Candice Coghlin: Yes. I love mangoes.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: I would be a mango tree. We have lots of mango trees in Jamaica. You can eat mangoes and your belly would be full for the whole day because if it's ripe or it's delicious, but if it's green, you can still eat it. You just put a little bit of salt and a little bit black pepper. You're good to go. So if I think I was a mango tree, I'd never go angry.

Candice Coghlin: Amazing. I love that. That's fantastic.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: How about you Candice?

Candice Coghlin: So it's funny, everybody asks me at the end of the episode, [01:19:00] too. So I would be a Birch tree, specific in Northern Ontario in the Kawarthas, because I spent my summers as a kid, up in the Kawarthas and Birch trees just always bring me back to that beautiful space in, in Canada, where we have lakes and the smell of summer is just a Birch tree to me. So that would be my tree of choice as well.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: Beautiful.

Candice Coghlin: I want to thank you both for being part of our episode today, you both bring so much joy to writing and your stories and your journeys are both so powerful. And, I'm, so excited to read more of your writings Tamara and continue to learn with you Sharon, through your workshops and, for those people who are listening right now, who are interested, we do plan on having another workshop with Dr. Sharon Bray, and we will keep you [01:20:00] all informed about when that is, because it's definitely something that I would recommend to anyone who wants to go through their journey and have some support through that because Sharon has definitely helped myself and Tamara and others in the group in getting our feelings and, our history down on paper.

So thank you both so much. I really appreciate you being here.

Tamara Hartley-Harris: You're welcome Candce.

Dr. Sharon Bray: Fantastic. Thank you. Thank you for inviting me to do this. It was wonderful to hear Tamara's whole story which I hadn't heard only bits of before.

And Candice, it's been a joy to work with you, so thank you so much and I will leave you to it.

Candice Coghlin: Thank you. Thank you both for joining us and sharing your stories. We will talk to you soon on the next episode.

Don't forget to subscribe to the Living Transplant Podcast, wherever you're accessing [01:21:00] this today.

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