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**PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY**

**GUEST NAME: DR. NCUMISA JILATA – AFRICA’S YOUNGEST NEUROSURGEON**

<b>SPEAKER</b>	<b>TRANSCRIPTION</b>
DR. MALKA	Hello, I’m Dr. Amaleya Goneos-Malka, welcome to ‘Womanity – Women in Unity’. The show that celebrates prominent and ordinary African Women’s milestone achievements in their struggles for liberation, self-emancipation, human rights, democracy, racism, socio-economic class division and gender based violence.
DR.MALKA	Joining us in studio today in Johannesburg, South Africa is Dr. Ncumisa Jilata who is Africa’s youngest Neurosurgeon. Her exceptional achievement was highlighted by Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa in an address to the National Assembly on 31 <sup>st</sup> May earlier this year. Welcome to the show!
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>Wow what an introduction, thank you very much for the invite I’m enjoying myself.</b>
DR. MALKA	And now I’m going to talk a little bit more in terms of your profile as we go into the first question.
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>No problem.</b>
DR.MALKA	You completed your Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery degree at Walter Sisulu University’s...
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>....yes I did....</b>
DR. MALKA	....Umtata Faculty of Health Sciences in....
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>....in 2009...</b>
DR. MALKA	...2009 and then in 2010 you commenced with an internship at the Charlotte Maxeke Hospital and went on to do a year of community work, then in 2013 you enrolled at the University of Pretoria, my alma mater...
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>....oh lovely....</b>
DR.MALKA	...to do your registrar training and officially at the age of 29 became Africa’s youngest Neurosurgeon.
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>Ja that’s pretty much it.</b>
DR. MALKA	Can you share with our listeners what made you decide to become a neurosurgeon?
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>Okay the decision to become a neurosurgeon was I think twofold, you know, as a young person you sort of look at a lot of things and the decision to eventually pick one usually is influenced by a lot of things, so I’d say what stands out for me in terms of picking neurosciences as a whole was a particular grade 11 teacher that we had, his name is Mr. Naudé, you know, the love he had for teaching the subject it was just...it was amazing. So the introduction he gave us to the central nervous system as a whole and you know the functioning or the electrochemistry or the electro circuitry of the nervous system itself, it was one of those things that I thought this is new, this is interesting, this is very fascinating you know, so from then on I decided okay I like neurosciences but at that point of course I wasn’t sure what in neurosciences I’d like to do. So then I decided I’ll go into medical school there’s still a bit of neurology there or you know neuro related issues that one can deal with and I particularly remember I think third year or fourth year when we then started going to the hospital now to, you know, get a little bit of a feel....</b>
DR. MALKA	...so this is the practical training ...
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>...the practical training, yes....</b>
DR.MALKA	...as part of your studies....
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>...yes, yes we had to go into the hospital, you’re introduced to patient care</b>

	<p>you know you're introduced to how to talk to patients, so I realised there was a shortage of neurosurgeons because particularly in Walter Sisulu University where I studied, which is attached to the Nelson Mandela Hospital I realised there were actually no neurosurgeons, despite the pathologists being there you know, because it's a huge area that the hospital is servicing so you'd find when you get say in neurosurgical emergencies there was a general surgeon who would sort of do the emergency operation but then everything else, you know, the more complicated, the tumours, the interesting actually fascinating parts of neurosurgery you would just see the patient, the imaging would be done and the patient then have to be sent to Durban or to Cape Town. So it was always sort of this more like a mystery to me like what happens to those patients when they then get to Durban and Cape Town and that's when I decided you know what, that's what I'm going to do. First and foremost it is fascinating, number two there is a genuine need for neurosurgeons so that's pretty much what influenced my decision making.</p>
DR. MALKA	So looking at demand and supply, trying to fill that gap...
DR. JILATA	....well, yes, yes.
DR. MALKA	Can you tell us a little bit more about the type of work that you do, what it entails 'cause effectively you're the brain doctor?
DR. JILATA	<p>I am. Interestingly you know how sort of people have this misconception about neurosurgery, you know, there's like common phrases like you know it's not brain surgery when you speak about sort of unimportant tasks but I think it only serves to confuse people because I think most people...you would relate to neurosurgery if you were to do it but of course it requires a lot of dedication. Actually first let me start by saying one of the fascinating things about neuro is that no day is the same as the previous one so I'll describe a typical day but you must be aware that the next day may be completely different to what it was the previous day. So what we do is we investigate, we diagnose and we treat medically and surgically right through to rehabilitation of neurological pathologies. Now these have to be structural pathologies, by that I mean there has to be something that you can see on imaging that needs to be fixed, whether it is a tumour or vascular problem you know, whatever it may be and what we generally do is it includes patients admissions, you speak to the patients, find out what the possible problems are, you do the lab workup, the imaging of course we work a lot with radiologists, you know, in terms of deciding what exactly the problem is, what it most likely is. Planning for theatre as well, so you need a tremendous amount of time dedicated to the planning itself because no patient is the same as the previous one, you know, there's a saying that we have "patients don't read textbooks" you know, so you can have somebody with exactly the same problem as the previous one but then the presentation is completely different so part of the planning involves you, you know, understanding the anatomy quite intensely and knowing that whatever it is you are trying or aiming to do in theatre you leave the rest of the brain tissue as normal as possible, especially if there is normal brain tissue surrounding whatever the problem is, so there's a lot of planning that goes behind it.</p>
DR. MALKA	And a lot of risk.
DR. JILATA	..a lot of risks, definitely, so a part of that is then you go, you operate and there's still the post op care you know which usually involves the post op critical care which is ICU and part and parcel of that then involves you then teaching the medical students, you know, we get medical students that rotate to us and so your responsibility then would be to make sure that

	<p>when they leave the department, they usually come for a week or two with us and of course they won't know the intricate details of neurosurgery but you want them to sort of, when they become GP's, you know, you know that they're confident and at they're least confident of detecting a neurosurgical emergency and know when to refer to a neurosurgeon and of course part of teaching the students will then mean that you need to then take part of the discussions, the academic discussions with the registrars as well. <b>So that's pretty much what we do.</b></p>
DR. MALKA	It's quite a broad set of responsibilities and lots of interaction with different members of the team and having....
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>...definitely....</b>
DR. MALKA	...everybody....
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>...teamwork....</b>
DR. MALKA	...fit in together....
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>...teamwork...</b>
DR. MALKA	...to make it work...
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<p><b>...even in theatre itself, you know, there's no operation that ever goes without sort of ....it's like the opera or it's like music, you know, each piece has got its own vital role to play so by that I mean there's you, or let me say myself who's then the surgeon at the time, you've got the assistant, you know, the assistant doctor, you've got the scrub sister, the scrub nurse, you've got the anaesthetist, you've got of course the assistant to the anaesthetist, all of these people have got such a vital role because should a mistake happen from each and anyone of them somebody else must then sort of cover up in the five people that I've mentioned. So I may cause a bleed and somebody else, the anaesthetist, must make sure that we top up the blood in terms of you know, blood transfusion they may have, so it's really its teamwork.</b></p>
DR. MALKA	And I think that's a lovely analogy using orchestra because beyond everyone doing their particular role, there's also a key element of timing involved too....
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>...yes definitely...</b>
DR. MALKA	...you've got to work together and synchronise...
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>...ja...</b>
DR. MALKA	What would you say are some of the greatest challenges in the role that you've experienced so far?
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<p><b>I think one of the biggest challenges would be I think time management, that's one that I'd say I can relate to the most. Time, you know, as an individual time is multifaceted and I find in those facets there tends to be an issue because what this job requires actually is yourself, part of your family, you're whole thinking process has to be at any given point in time that oh okay Mrs. So and so is still waiting for an MRI whereas Mr. So and so is not turing and needs this, so you find a whole lot of time is dedicated to the hospital and I find with time management one needs to make a conscious decision as to how you're going to make a 24 hour day stretch into a 25 hour day...</b></p>
DR. MALKA	...at least...
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<p><b>...at least a 25 hour day, you know, so of course it takes a great deal of help from you know the rest of the people that are around you and all of that but I find one of the biggest challenges that I've had was time management, you know, there's almost always a deadline, there's presentations you've got to prepare, you're doing you know on call duties which means you must be there the whole night, you must still prepare for emergency theatre and you know you must still sort of have a social existence, which is almost impossible when you are a registrar so I think time management is one of</b></p>

	<b>the ja, the biggest challenges one will face when considering a career in neurosurgery.</b>
DR. MALKA	And there's tremendous organisation that goes along with it too.
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>Oh definitely, yes, yes.</b>
DR. MALKA	One point that remained with me after doing the research on you for this show was about the good and the bad days in your field and I read that you'd said "patients often come in having been involved in an accident, there's blood in their brain and they can't speak and there is no better feeling than watching them recover after you've operated on them", but on the other hand you also said "one of the worst things about the job is the feeling of helplessness when you know that there's nothing that you can do for a patient" ....
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>...definitely, definitely...</b>
DR. MALKA	So can you share with us how you manage these feelings, these emotions and still find the power to come to work every morning and start all over again not knowing what to expect because as you said every single day is different?
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>...it's different definitely okay, that's an interesting question. Well I would say firstly one needs to understand that you are first and foremost human before you are a doctor which is going to mean that you are also subject to the same feelings that one would have you know with regards to grief and things like that. The problem comes, as I've just explained, you tend to bond a bit with your patients because now in this whole preparation process you know for theatre and you know doing the lab workups, seeing what's abnormal, correcting it, you get to know people's personalities....</b>
DR. MALKA	...and it's intimate, you are doing something that will affect their life...
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>...definitely and now the problem comes...well it's not necessarily a problem but what tends to happen is that say you come in, you are with your mother, your mother has got breast cancer which has now spread to the brain and you've come in and she's presenting with a brain tumour or brain cancer or you know whatever you choose to call it. Now the issue comes in the fact that now I get to know your mom, her personality, I get to know you, your husband's personality, everybody in the family because you know throughout the whole process I've got to be explaining to you okay this is what we're doing now, this is what we've found, this is where we're at, you know, then I need to explain to you okay fine in terms of the prognosis this is what we're expecting, there are different things we need to look at. We look at things like age, we look at things like .....status, by that I mean are you diabetic, hypertensive things like that that are actually going to affect the decision making, you know. We look at things like your performance skills you know in terms of what are you currently able to do, what are you not currently able to do, so in all of that you're getting to know the person because you're getting to know the most intimate parts of their lives. Now should that person die or things don't go as planned one needs to know that it is okay to allow themselves to feel that grief as well. Whether you're going to allow yourself an hour, whether you're going to allow yourself a minute, but you've got to allow yourself to feel the grief while at the same time sort of trying to manage the family's expectations as well. So I would say part of the management is having to realise that it is normal to feel the grief because I what I think what I tried to do in the beginning was just act like ag it's okay patients are patients you know and you move on but you find in the long run it only affects you, so it is okay to feel and the next day you tell yourself you know what, you're doing more good than bad at the end of the day and of course you need to at some point make sure the feeling you get from the ones that do very well it is enough to sustain you to sort of cover up for the ones that don't do so</b>

	<b>well, you know.</b>
DR. MALKA	To outweigh the bad.
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>Yes, definitely.</b>
DR. MALKA	On that note how would you say being a neurosurgeon has changed your perspective of life, the way you view the world now?
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>I must say it has changed it. Firstly do you know when you're young and you're growing up and you think to yourself there's so much the world has to offer and you have to be perfect, things are black and white, there are no grey zones. You either want to be you know a pilot and you must be that or you want to be a presenter, you must be that and you must be this perfect pretty woman who gets married and you do this and that. The one thing neuro has taught me is that firstly life is precious, it is short and it is not guaranteed. I maybe now on my way home from here, get into a car accident and that's the end of it, you know, so trying to live one's life to please people is usually only to the detriment of one's own peace inside. So the perspective that I've got now on life now is you know what I'm happy to be alive today firstly, things can go wrong; they can go very right as well so really don't sweat the small stuff, you know, in simple terms don't sweat the small stuff.</b>
DR. MALKA	And as we are a gender based show I also heard from one of your previous interviews that you had said that you've had to work hard to prove yourself in the male dominated field of medicine and specifically, which I find mind blowing, that it was common to be second guessed as a woman but one's work ethic will always speak volumes and as a result of that you'd hoped to become as a worthy standard for young girls, to give them the courage to break through those barriers of patriarchy in medical science. Can you elaborate on this issue of bias towards women and also what your suggestions would be to other women when facing similar circumstances?
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>Ja it's a very important point you're raising and you'll find part of the problem is not actually even within the organisation itself but you find the society at large, you know, when you get to a hospital - I'm going to start from the patient's perspective. You get to the hospital, you are there with your dad, he just fell today and the casualty officer has told you no there's a small bleed you know or big enough to warrant surgery and we're going to wait for the neurosurgeon to come and they're currently still in theatre. So it is not uncommon to get there, start explaining the situation to the patient and having introduced yourself as Dr. Jilata and this is what we're going to do, this is the cut we're going to make and this is the reason your dad has got this etc., etc., etc. Then the next question comes, firstly you're young and now you're a woman, then the next question is actually when we came we were told that the doctor is in theatre, do you know when he is going to be out and you think to yourself but like when I came here I introduced myself as Dr. Jilata, I work in neurosurgery and so I am actually the doctor taking care of you. Okay so then so how many of these operations have you done? It's not an unfair question but of course being a young woman you tend to find that you get it a whole lot more than perhaps your male counterparts, you know, so but with growth and maturity and of course having spent the time that I've spent in neuro, you know, you get to get a bit of resilience to that and train yourself that you have to sound confident at any given point in time so that even if somebody is going to be second guessing you, they are second guessing the work part of it but not necessarily you as a person and even within the organisation itself, you may have say maybe senior members of the department perhaps trusting, you know, the male counterparts more than they would trust you,</b>

	despite the fact that you're actually at the same level, you know, and I mean as has been proven before medicine is not necessarily a testosterone demanding kind of job but rather an intellect demanding kind of job, which I think it has been proven that women have what it takes to be just as good.
DR. MALKA	Do you find though because of those components of being young, of being a woman that that drives you to work harder?
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>Definitely. You know I always say to myself if I am to go and see a gynaecologist or I'm to go and see say a paediatric surgeon for my child, because I know how hard that person has had to work to get to where they are, they had to be extra good, so trust me you go to a woman. I'm not saying that they're better than their male counterparts but because I know how good they had to be at their job, to be taken seriously, firstly by the patients, by their teachers, the professors that have taken them into the job you know, so you have to work that...go the extra mile because sometimes you'll find say there's a new consultant coming into your department from another hospital, they see oh here's a lady okay at times they'll refer to you as "where's that girl" you know and you think to yourself had I been male would you have been you know calling out for me like that "where's that boy" because I don't recall anybody ever being called like that, you know, "where's that boy" but somehow when it's you being a lady it's okay to just be to referred to as "where's that girl" whereas....and those are little things where you decide you know what I'm going to show you, I'm going to do this and I'm actually going to do it better than you, you know, so because of that I tend to....it may be biased on my part but I tend to trust the female doctors a tad bit more.</b>
DR. MALKA	I think that.....
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>...it sounds wrong but that's just a bias on my part...</b>
DR. MALKA	...well I think that is a fantastic insider perspective as an insight which really goes to show the journey that women have had to take and you know the pain that they've had to walk through...
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>...to go through exactly...</b>
DR. MALKA	...that gives them perhaps the edge in their profession.
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>Exactly, exactly.</b>
DR. MALKA	Today we're talking to Dr. Ncumisa Jilata who is Africa's youngest Neurosurgeon; we would love to receive your comments on Twitter: @WomanityTalk.
D. MALKA	Dr. Jilata when we last left off we were talking a bit about gender. Gender equality is increasingly a global focus, as such, taking into consideration the different challenges and the successes that women's legal rights have had over the last few years, in your opinion do you believe that 50/50 representation across the board is attainable?
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>I believe that, you know, whole heartedly so actually and the problem is though for anything to change it takes time and we start by changing the mentality first and even if it means you've got to focus on generation by targeting different aspects in each generation, but eventually you will get there and I believe that we can actually get there within my lifetime because I was, actually just to digress a bit, thinking about something similar the other day with my nephew, here's a young man who is eight years old you know, of course a little boy, but in his world right now for example his aunt is a neurosurgeon, his paediatrician is a woman, in his world you know women are equally good so there's no talk about no this one is a lady so she might not be as good, this one is....so by virtue of having those types of role models you then raise a young man or a generation</b>

	<p>which sees no gender in terms of gender roles so we can definitely attain it but we do, however, I think we've got a long way to go you know and part of it involves I think if we are to attain this dream perhaps within my lifetime, we need more of the movements which are sort of directed towards women empowerment but try sort of bridge the gap between private sector, government sector and academic sector because you find sometimes these three sectors sort of exist independently you know of each other but now to try raise, you know, the amount or the number of women who are sort of in leadership roles or in high decision making roles, so we need something or more movements to sort of try bridge this gap between these three. So I definitely think it's an attainable dream.</p>
DR. MALKA	Well I'm glad you say that in your lifetime...
DR. JILATA	<p>...definitely in my lifetime because want to see it. I'd like to wake up one day and even if I'm 65 or I'm 70 and not be judged for being a woman, you can be judged for being old because you're old and maybe you started you know getting dementia or something, so at 75 I'd like to know that no, any young girl that's growing up I'd like to know that they're not going through the same struggles that perhaps I had to go through otherwise we will not really have achieved anything in terms of this drive towards women empowerment, making sure that we're all you know equal etc., etc.</p>
DR. MALKA	It's interesting that you spoke about that triad of academics, of business and of the political space or the public space and really we're doing well in the public space.
DR. JILATA	<p>Ja they're doing well and I'll speak of my hospital actually you know, these are some of the things that you notice and as you are you know going through registrar time you're like you know what I see the point you know, you look at the head of department of departments like radiology, you look at the head of department of urology which is a male department, you know, departments you know the list is there and these are ladies who are leading the departments.</p>
DR. MALKA	How do you think...because this is where I see that there's lots of value, so we've got public sector, we've got specifically in the healthcare environment, business is a totally different story, our numbers are still not there. Within the academic space we also have lower numbers of women pushing through; what learning's do you think we can take from the public sector even in the health environment and replicate within other sectors?
DR. JILATA	<p>I would think, like I said, having specific women empowerment movements, you know, I think the importance of that cannot be you know overstressed because unfortunately one thing the private sector tends to excel in is profit making, you know, and to try improve the number of girl children who are now going to say okay I want to be a pilot, I want to be a neurosurgeon, I want to do this I...you need resources and funding for that so whether they later on in life continue in the public sector or in the academic sector or in the private sector, the point of the matter is the country at large will then have seen an increase in terms of the number of professionals or let me say people who are in high decision making levels that are now women. So it all goes back or boils down to us as a country taking those types of movements seriously and having more of them, you know, encouraging people to do such because trust me when you hear, even if you're a grade 10 child that oh by the way there's funding from whatever company you know and they specifically sponsor women with an interest in...it could be...I'll speak of neurosurgery 'cause it's what I know. Even if you didn't know much about neurosurgery at that point you'll think okay what is that, you'll start googling about it, you'll start knowing more about it you know,</p>

	<p>you apply for the scholarship and you end up doing it and I kid you not in 10-15 years time you will see a difference in terms of if there were 5 before there will definitely be more than 10, you know, if there were 10 before there will be 30 you know and like you were saying in that pursuit of equality, it starts there.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>So it's identifying opportunities, looking where the resources are....</p>
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<p><b>...definitely...</b></p>
DR. MALKA	<p>...and following the money....</p>
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<p><b>...that's pretty much it.</b></p>
DR. MALKA	<p>In a similar track here, we're talking a lot about education and I think that part of driving one of... I guess one of the entities or aspects of Womanity is about driving the idea that education is a key element for progress and development amongst women in Africa and I frequently ask my guests to share some of their experiences regarding obstacles that they've encountered whilst they're building their career to demonstrate to everyone who's listening to us the fact is that the achievements that you've managed today weren't received on a silver platter, it required tremendous hard work and sacrifice...</p>
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<p><b>...that is true...</b></p>
DR. MALKA	<p>...so can you tell us a little bit about some of those obstacles that you've experienced and have overcome?</p>
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<p><b>Okay I would think...I think for me it always goes back to the time management issue in terms of obstacles and there is a tremendous amount of work that one has to put in and I cannot overstress the importance of persevering through that hard work, you know. There are times when you wake up and think you know is this even worth it, you know, some of your friends are travelling the world, they are having...you know, there's a dinner to celebrate this to celebrate that, they're onto their second children you know and at some point you start feeling like you are a child with delayed milestones, you know, everyone else is doing this and you're sort of doing something a little bit different, you know, so that on its own it can pose as an obstacle because I mean you've got to exist as an entity, by that I mean you've got to exist there's the doctor version of you, the daughter version of you, you know the friend version of you, the girlfriend version of you, there's a you know...so to try balance all of these I found was...it was quite strenuous and of course while all of that is happening there is still the expectation at work to excel at what you do. You're doing long calls, you're tired, but in terms of you know the dexterity that you've got to have, it can't change now just because you are tired and you've been working for the past twelve hours, you've just got to continue....</b></p>
DR. MALKA	<p>...but do you think there needs to be a balance because if you look at where you're going, the trajectory that you're taking, the reality is that you're pursuing a career at a very high level, that if you were doing something which required less mental investment, less time investment then you'd have time to do different things....</p>
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<p><b>...everything else...</b></p>
DR. MALKA	<p>...and everything else, so....</p>
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<p><b>...that's where now....I hear you...that's where the importance of having an outlet sort of comes in because remember a lot of what you do at work is going to require energy from you, meaning energy expenditure, so at any given point in time energy is being taken out from you. You may be reenergised by the feeling of oh okay op went well, you know, etc., but then you are still tired but you need an outlet by that I mean you need something where or things that you can do, which usually are social things or not necessarily, it can be exercise....</b></p>

DR. MALKA	....so totally unrelated....
DR. JILATA	...exactly totally unrelated where after you've done that, whatever it is, you know you feel reenergised, you've recuperated, you can tackle on the next ten days of your life without any problems. So unfortunately you do need that kind of balance, the proportions then are very individualised and it depends on you know on one and what they view is the most important aspect on that given day or at that given hour because things change, what was important yesterday at 12 o'clock may not necessarily be as important as today at 12.
DR. MALKA	That's very true that our life is in flux and you've got to take these dynamic considerations as they come. One question which I ask all my guests on this show is about some of the factors that they consider to have contributed to their success, so some people speak about hard work, others talk about perseverance; in your opinion what would you say have been some of the key drivers?
DR. JILATA	I would say strategising and keeping focus of the end goal and you know you need around you people that believe in the same vision, you know, because there are lots of distractions, you know, whatever it is you are trying to achieve in life there will always be distractions and they will not come labelled as distractions, you know, 'cause sometimes you won't know something is a distraction until an external factor says just by the way these are just distractions you don't need at this point in your life you know so of course I must say one of the driving factors has been a very good mentoring system you know. When you have someone...
DR. MALKA	...a formal mentoring system or how....tell us about...
DR. JILATA	...it can be formal or informal because the type of mentoring system that I'm specifically speaking of was not necessarily formal as in okay, here is your mentor for the next four/five years of your life but this is lady, her name is Dr. Mfundisa, I don't know if you might have heard about her you know, who just had this excitement you know from day one about me wanting to do neurosurgery and because now she's a lady in the department, somebody who's living it, so you yourself then get somebody to sort of emulate, what she does you do, you know and people will speak of oh you know ladies are this, ladies are that but then ultimately here's somebody who saw potential in you and decided oh okay, no trust me you will be able to there's no need to ....., you will be fine go ahead do it and then throughout then will have to remind you once in a while okay listen these are just distractions now, just keep focused on the end goal these are the exams you need to write, move forward and that's it. And of course in terms of role modelling it goes over and above just let me give you question papers in terms of this is what you need to practice for the exams, just existing, the way you do things you know. You know when people speak of you decided to do neurosurgery are you not scared that no man will want to marry you or you won't have kids? I'm like I'm always...
DR. MALKA	....did you really have someone ask that?
DR. JILATA	...I still have them today...
DR. MALKA	...what is the fear?
DR. JILATA	Thank you, so I'll always say to people no, not really I've got a really good role model who's happily married with children so no such fears at all, so it's not like my risk or my chance at marriage and children has now decreased or increased because now I'm a neurosurgeon you understand? So I'd say definitely a mentoring system is one of the driving forces and of course each and every organisation needs to invest in such, whether it's going to be a formal mentoring system or informal because once in a while people need to be guided in terms of okay now you're digressing, you need

	<b>to come back, focus, focus, focus, that's it.</b>
DR. MALKA	I think that's a wonderful learning, she's clearly been one of the strong women in your life. Who else would you say has been a strong influence to contribute in terms of making you the person that you are today?
DR. JILATA	<b>I think the women generally that I've been exposed to while growing up have been strong women, you know, from my mom, my aunts, my sisters because sometimes you watch people and because of the roles that they play, be it in terms of home management or their jobs, you know, and you watch how they do...so for me I've never sort of had that you know women are less capable of anything, you know I grew up in my neighbourhood in Umtata you know my mom, a very strong woman, my sisters I'd say the same, I mean my next door neighbour you know they always say it takes a community to raise a child, I grew up with her being a bank manager a regional bank manager so it's one of those things where you sort of had a strong network of women around you who are themselves doing things and I sort of come from a community where the women are very strong willed and usually what they want they get, so it is not like it's something new that I've done but it's almost an...you know you've kind of emulated the people that have been there in your life before and I hope that somebody else watching this or looking at me or other people like me then get the same kind of inspiration and thinks actually there's nothing standing in my way, whatever I want to do I can do, whatever it may be, you know, and that's pretty much it.</b>
DR.MALKA	That's a great message and lastly if I can ask you as we close out our conversation today if you can share a few words of inspiration which you'd like to pass onto women, young ladies, girls who are listening to us on the continent?
DR. JILATA	<b>I would say, actually not even to the young ladies, to the older ladies as well, there is nothing that is as important as encouraging the next person, whether the next person is young or old or middle aged, it really is immaterial because at times you may have a sort of a belief system in yourself that you can do something but then you may also have doubts about yourself in terms of maybe I'm not good enough, maybe or builds this whole sort of facade around what it is that you're trying to achieve and you think no it seems too abstract and who am I to think I can achieve that so sometimes self worth, it may once in a while you know need to be validated by the people around you and I'm not necessarily saying that you need to seek the approval of other people but you cannot underrate the importance of encouraging the next person and you don't know the extra mile that it may go you know, so I tend to find that we underrate that kind of importance. Number two I think one of the most difficult decisions about anything one wants to do is deciding what one wants to do. Once you've decided what it is that you want to do it is easier to kind of look around as to ways and means to get there but the problem at times is deciding what to do, so over and above that modelling of roles to people is what I find should not be underrated as well. So by you being you, for example a presenter SABC Africa, somebody else might not have known that you know this kind of...this beautiful glamorous job that one may have but by them watching somebody else do it and thinking oh and she's a lady as well, I can do it you know, so definitely that's what I'll say and of course always be cognizant of the focus itself because trust me distractions will come and you just have to keep focused and know that I'm trying to move from point a to b, eventually to c, what comes in between is just that, it's serves to distract me and that's it. So that's pretty much it.</b>
DR. MALKA	Thank you for that great message, it's been a pleasure having you in studio

	today....
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>...thank you so much for the invitation...</b>
DR. MALKA	...and we wish you all the best of luck in the many years that are ahead of you in your career.
<b>DR. JILATA</b>	<b>Thank you very much.</b>
	<b>PROGRAMME END</b>