

PROGRAM DATE: 2024 -05-16

PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY - WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: SHANNON ESRA – AWARD WINNING SOUTH AFRICAN ACTRESS

| SPEAKER      | TRANSCRIPTION   |
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| DR. MALKA    | Hello, I'm Dr. Amaleya Goneos-Malka, welcome to 'Womanity– Women in Unity'. The show that celebrates women's milestone achievements in their struggle for liberation, self-emancipation, human rights, democracy and much more.   |
| DR. MALKA    | Joining us today is award winning South African actress Shannon Esra. Her first professional acting role was playing Siri in the feature film <i>I Dreamed of Africa</i> with Kim Basinger. Some of her TV work has included <i>Lioness</i> , <i>Isidingo</i> , <i>The Queen</i> , <i>Hard Copy</i> and theatre wise she has just wrapped up a one-woman play <i>My Left Breast</i> . Welcome to the show!  |
| SHANNON ESRA | <b>Thank you so much, it's wonderful to be here.</b>  |
| DR. MALKA    | Shannon we are really happy to host you, delighted for you to be on our show today. I wanted to ask you, starting off, what was it that made you realise you wanted to be an actress?   |
| SHANNON ESRA | <b>I liked being a monkey as a child. I liked impersonating things, I liked mimicking things and look I think a lot of children do, but that continued throughout my life and growing up and going to the various schools that I did there was always the opportunity to be in plays and dance and sing and I've always loved entertaining people, but more than anything I really enjoyed being in someone else's shoes. I enjoyed inhabiting someone else's wardrobe, I enjoyed all the aspects of the components that make actors who they are, you know, to fit it to someone else, but it happened from a very young age, very, very young.</b>  |
| DR. MALKA    | And how supportive were your family in terms of helping you realize your ambitions, because sometimes, let's face it, acting is seen as almost the secondary job, it's kind of no you've got to focus on the academics first.   |
| SHANNON ESRA | <b>They had a backup plan. Look, I'll be honest, after I did the film with Kim Basinger, when I did, <i>I Dreamed of Africa</i>, I came back and I was like that's it, this is all I want to do, and I was looking to go into physio or occupational therapy. I have a big passion for biology, so when I was like in standard eight or grade 10, I actually would have loved to be a cardiac surgeon, but I hate studying, I just don't have it in me and so my dad knew that I wanted to go into some field of medicine and I must say there was a lot of fighting. There was not a lot of support initially, but thankfully my parents soon realized that I don't back down and I wasn't going to give up on what I felt was an intrinsic aspect of who I actually am, it's not just what I do. So, now I mean my parents are just so unbelievably supportive and have been now for years and years and when they realized that there was no way I was going to throw in the towel, they were on board, so I have been very fortunate.</b> |
| DR. MALKA    | And it's almost as though, listening to you, that acting has really become part of your identity, it's part of your composition, it's not just a job that you do.   |
| SHANNON ESRA | <b>No, it's not. It is my greatest joy, it is my passion, my love and it's not about whether or not I am on every TV screen or if I am in every cinema</b>  |

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|                 | <p>or if I am in every theatre, it's not about that. It's not about fame or celebrity for me, in fact that's the stuff that I really am not good at. I just love telling stories. I want to know that I can impact one person, you know, I often say to young actors when they tell me that they want to be actors, I say okay I've got a question for you, well usually there's two, the first one is; do you want to be great or do you want to make an impact, and if the answer is I want to be great, I'm like well then I am not the person to help you because then you're interested in fame. And then the second question is do you have any talent, is there something to work with, because it is such a hard industry, you can't go in there with complete delusions of what you're capable of. Look, hard work goes a really long way, but you need to have an adept understanding of your own skillset, which can be taught, but there has to be some element of talent. Potential, you know.</p>  |
| DR. MALKA       | <p>Talk to us a little about the storytelling dynamic, because I think that that's such an important part of media consumption that people are looking out to, that they're drawn in and immersed into a story because of the way that someone's telling it.</p>   |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <p>I mean if you consider before television, we were listening to radio dramas. We were a lot better at listening to story before all these screens and social media took on this juggernaut that it is now. We've been sitting around fires since the beginning of time telling stories, it is the way that we speak to our history, our genealogy, our everything. So, I think story is the most important part of our humanity, it is a vital aspect of who we are, to feel seen, to feel understood, to feel loved and appreciated, to feel that someone else can share in your pain. You know we're actually all the same, we all bleed the same colour blood and I think that is what story has the capacity to show us, that you are not alone. None of us are alone. We're all going through something, you know, we're all in this big ocean of life and some of us have very different lifeboats and rafts and catamarans and yachts that we're on. Some of us are very lucky and some of us are not, but we are in the same body of water, and that is what story does, it connects us.</p> |
| DR. MALKA       | <p>And in that vein of storytelling, you are taking on a character, you're taking on a lens that interprets the story for an audience; can you tell us about some of the most memorable characters you've played and why they resonate with you?</p>   |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <p>I am always looking for characters that are different and that go against the status quo. I have to resonate with someone's journey, and I am very attracted to people who are vastly different to me so that I can really take myself and put myself in someone else's world. Take my world view, my experience and go oh wow, this is where this person sits. You know I always say that acting is not an act of self-expression, it's an act of self-discovery, so you learn something about yourself as you're pushing through someone else's experience. The most memorable characters, I mean gosh there have been so many, fortunately I have been very blessed, I always go back to Samantha Hugo from <i>Lioness</i>, because she was just so impacting on my own life at that time, but I always say my characters are like my children and to pick one over the other just feels very wrong.</p>   |
| DR. MALKA       | <p>I can imagine, I mean it's like wearing, just thinking about it as wearing accessories of hats and jackets and choosing them, but obviously yours is three dimensional.</p>   |

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| SHANNON<br>ESRA | There is that external process, but internally there are so many shifts that are happening in you, even if it is rhythm and cadence and the way that you use your voice, or the way that you might say a sentence. A look, your body posture, like it all starts to come together in this beautiful organic moving puzzle piece.   |
| DR. MALKA       | And I have to ask, because we are a gender-based show, is women's representation and when I say women's representation, sometimes when stories are articulated by men there's certain stereotypes of the way they have envisaged the female character to be, which may not necessarily be a true rendition of who women are. So, when I ask if women's representation is a factor that influences our choices of roles, how true would that ring with you?   |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | Deeply. Deeply. I'm not saying a male writer can't write a woman well. It's possible. Of course, it's possible and we do see some characters that are represented very well through male writers, but I do think it is important for any writer to have an intrinsic understanding of what it is that they are speaking to. For me, I am a feminist and I know that word has somehow become dirty, I don't know why, I mean I do know why but there is not enough time to talk to that, but I am very, very passionate about speaking and communicating and exploring female issues through a feminine lens. We look at women very differently as women, the male gaze is very different. What is also something that I noticed is that women are tougher on women. Women are a lot easier on men, we've been taught to, we've been brainwashed by society to deal with men better than ourselves and I think that's a big problem and that's something I'm very interested in exploring and fighting. |
| DR. MALKA       | Yes, I agree with you on that point, and there's an example that often repeats itself is the way that a man is perceived to behave. So, for instance thinking about the corporate space, so the man being the boss and whatever demeanour he is putting on it is seen as assertion, whereas if a woman adopts the same type of behaviour, she is perceived as bossy.   |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | Oh so, if she's a leader, she's then bossy, it's a huge problem. It's a huge problem.  |
| DR. MALKA       | And I think a lot to do social stereotyping and conditioning.  |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | Cultural and survival condition, 100%, it is a man's world and it's very unfortunate, I mean women have been repressed since the beginning of time, I mean we only got the vote in the 60s, if I'm not mistaken, you know, we weren't even expected to have jobs. We have this financial handicap of once you get married, they will take care of you, it's your job to raise the children and be at home and then let's say the marriage doesn't work, then what happens. You have no agency, you have no ability to stand on your own feet, because you weren't taught how to. It was just expected that you were to fit into this mould and look, I am not a conventional person at all, I balk at it, I don't live a conventional life in any way, but I see a lot of women struggling, I see a lot of women across various different socio-economic ... I mean it's everywhere. It's everywhere, it permeates, and we've got to work against it, we've got to work for each other.                |
| DR. MALKA       | I like your description; working for each other and almost in a way of being able to change the system from within.  |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | Well, yes, because it is systemic. It's systemic.  |

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| DR. MALKA       | So, as we're on the topic of women's issues and very pertinent, thinking about breast cancer and the reason I raise this is because that is really the dominant theme of the play that you've been acting in, <i>My Left Breast</i> , and thinking about breast cancer just as a bit of an awareness for listenership purposes, that statistically one out of every eight women is at risk of developing breast cancer and I think that that's a worrying statistic.   |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <b>Terrifying.</b>   |
| DR. MALKA       | In terms of <i>My Left Breast</i> , I understand it delves into issues of mastectomy, loss, parenthood, rejection, transformation; can you share a few of the key aspects of the story with us?  |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <b>Sure, I mean you know look, it's called My Left Breast, so already the brain jumps to oh it's about cancer and it is. It is Susan Miller's personal account of what it is that she experienced in a 12-year timeframe, but it's not just about breast cancer, it's the impact from that diagnosis, through those 12 years. It is being a single parent of a son, it is figuring out later on in your life that you actually are sexually attracted to women, she identifies as a lesbian bisexual or a bisexual lesbian, so, she is exploring her sexuality. For the first time in her life, she has a passionate love who leaves her after eight years, when all the kids are now grown up and that was the promise, it was like when the kids are grown up this will be easier, and then she leaves her. So, you meet her a year after the love of her life has left her, has rejected their life together, and she is drowning in her own grief, but at no stage is she self-pitying, she is self-deprecating, she can laugh at the hard things and I think that's what is so enticing about this piece is that it explores so many emotional realms, but at the same time just as you feel like it's too much to bear, she has this amazing wit and pathos that just lightens it up. She's not just a survivor, she's a thriver, and she is inspiring, and women will see themselves, whether they've gone through breast cancer or cervical or ovarian, you know, I think breast cancer does get a lot more awareness because boobs are very visible, one of my best friends died four years ago from cervical cancer. So it's an amazing mirror for people, that's what I have noticed, that everyone sees some aspect of themselves, whether they have personally been affected by cancer, whether it's been a family member, whether they're suffering from heartache or a difficult relationship with their husband or wife or their children, or just battling to scramble through the demands of being a mom and being a woman, being a patient, being a human being really. It's an astonishing piece and there is something in it for everybody. It's so clever and true and honest and raw.</b> |
| DR. MALKA       | Yes, it sounds very rich, it sounds almost like an emotional rollercoaster of ...  |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <b>It is.</b>  |
| DR. MALKA       | .. highs and lows.   |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <b>It is. It is highs and lows and places in-between.</b>  |
| DR. MALKA       | And I understand it's a one-woman show, so you are captivating an audience for nearly an hour; how do you do it?   |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <b>Well firstly I think it always comes back to the work itself and it's that this piece is astonishing and so if you've got, I mean there's the old saying of</b>   |

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|                 | <p>even the best actor can't make good of a bad script. This is the most amazing play. It's already there, all I have to do is be true and honest and focused and real and find the emotional intensity that is required for the moment that it asks of me to do. How an audience receives it, once it's out, it's up to them, their own perception and perspective and life experience, they are going to make whatever it is of that they will and that's where it is no longer my responsibility. My responsibility is to tell the story and to be true to her experience, and in part it is my interpretation, because I am interpreting the level of anger or pain or grief or how can I push, and you never want to push, but she performed herself for two years, because she would go and do the show in America in 1994 and 1995. So, it's interesting to inhabit an actual woman, living. She's still alive, she's 80 years old, she lives in New York, and she just followed me on Instagram four days ago and it blew my mind.</p> |
| DR. MALKA       | That's fantastic. I didn't want to ask ...   |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <b>I know, I got the shakes. I was beside myself for 90 minutes, I was ridiculous, I was like a chicken with its head cut off.</b>   |
| DR. MALKA       | I didn't want to ask if she was still alive, so that's incredible!   |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <b>Yes, she just turned 80 on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April.</b>   |
| DR. MALKA       | Goodness me!   |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <b>And her son Jeremy is thriving, he is a writer, and it is so weird because I feel so connected to her, I felt like I was looking at pictures on her Instagram and I was oh my gosh, that's Jeremy, that's my son. I'm like it's not your son Shannon, it's the character you're playing, you know I have these like bits where it feels like a dream. I mean you know it doesn't but it's a warm feeling.</b>   |
| DR MALKA        | Amazing and I have to ask this, we spoke earlier when you said about your characters and it's kind of like you've got elements on each of them which are, I don't want to say favourites, but it's like you're putting on an attire and you're pulling them out and bringing to the front; I understand that you played this role 20 years ago, how does it feel bringing that character back and the person you are today, it must be completely different?   |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <b>Well firstly, I mean I only did a 20 minute very, very abridged version of it, I was 18 years old, what did I know about life. What did I know about grief and disappointment and pain and real heartbreak, and you're not meant to know it at 18, these are the things that come later in life, that's why experience is so vital and so important. I don't think I even ever touched on who she really was for that one performance of 20 minutes, there is no way, whereas to be able to do this as a 42-year-old woman, at this stage in my career has been the greatest honour. It has been transformative and to get back to theatre has been really terrifying but really beautiful.</b>   |
| DR MALKA        | Yes, there's no second takes.  |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <b>No, there's nowhere to hide, it's just me up on that stage. If I make a mistake, if I lose a line, if I forget where I am going, you know, and that is my biggest, biggest fear, that I won't be able to recover and then I'll have to beat myself up afterwards, which doesn't help, but it is, it's a huge, it's a mammoth undertaking and believe me I do not take it on without a lot of fear and the utmost respect.</b>   |

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| DR MALKA        | Shannon, how do you remember your lines?  |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <b>Repetition, repetition, repetition. I spent from December I actively started learning the script, it's about 37 pages. I carry my script everywhere ago, like a 'binkie', like my security blanket, I must have it with me, and it was an hour a day. An hour every day and then sometimes I take breaks and then it kind of just becomes a part of your everydayness. I now will just go and make tea and make lunch and drive and I can just rattle it off, it has to become so familiar to you that it is literally like breathing and it is every single day, it is repetition, repetition. There is no secret to it. It does not just happen, it's a process.</b>   |
| DR. MALKA       | I think it's a very useful skill to have. In the intro you spoke about when younger people are coming up to you and saying oh I'm thinking about being an actor and you asked them two questions, you know, one, if they wanted to make an impact, if they were wanting to be great, or if they were and I am just looking at this and I can't remember the ...   |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <b>The talent.</b>  |
| DR MALKA        | ... the talent factor. The reality is that in the creative arts space, it is a really tough industry, it's not a typical nine to five, you don't have opportunities all the time, it's not consistent; how do you manage it and also, dealing with rejection, I mean that's always a hard thing to take.  |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <b>Look, it's very difficult, and you have to learn, and the reality is that some days you'll be okay with it and some days you are not going to be okay with it, but rejection is absolutely a part of what it is that we do, and you have got to remind yourself that it is not personal. There are lots of people who are making a decision and for the most part it's actually not about you, it's energy. You are unique and wonderful as you are, there will be something for you, there's enough for everybody. It's hard though because there are times when you really want something, and you don't get it and it can be gutting. I lost out on a part a couple of years ago and I think I was depressed for about six weeks, it took so much to get myself out of that hole and they're very surprising and they're very scary, but you have got to have a lot of grit, you have to have a lot of tenacity, you need to be resilient, you are going to get a lot more no's than you are going to get yes's and that's why I say, if you want to make an impact, then you have to put up with the brick walls that you are going to feel like you are running into constantly. You are going to have a lot more downtime than you will have uptime, in that you are going to have more time not working than working and my God, if you have more time working, that is what I wish for everybody, I wish I had more time working, I have lots and lots and lots of downtime and you have got to constantly be honing your skills. Watch what's out there, watch what other actors are doing, read plays, read books, what people. Our job is people, so you can actually be working and not feel like you're working, but you're working. Go out into nature, walk, I mean I walk between 10 and 13 kilometers five times a week, that is for my own mental wellbeing, it's great for exercise as well, but try not sit around, don't get inactive, and I always say that when we are feeling like we don't know what's going on, we don't know, just move. Move. Just get out. Action propels more action and so even if it feels aimless, just go do it. You'll have to figure out your own mechanisms and coping skills</b> |

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|                 | <p>and they will become more and more robust as you start to explore them and really build them up over time, it doesn't just happen. I am 27 years into his now and believe me there are days when still I falter, and I flail, and I feel like I'm dying, and I feel like I want to run away and go and live in the Antarctica and I want to be an Eskimo and build an igloo and I want to build a snowman. I swear, it happens frequently, this is just the reality, and you just have to go with it.</p>   |
| DR MALKA        | <p>I think it's really important that you highlight reality so that people don't go in rose tinted lenses and are aware of how much downtime there is.</p>   |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <p><b>Self doubt. I'm not good enough and also, I have personally placed my own self-worth and my own value on my work, so what happens when I am not working, how am I then valued? How much am I worth then to myself? So, I think it is imperative, it's like going and seeing a therapist is very expensive, it is a total luxury, I have been very, very fortunate that I have been able to afford it and I have been in therapy for many years, throughout many, many years and there's a lot of help out there without going to see a therapist. There are a lot of books, there's a lot of content out there that can help you and I think don't be ashamed to ask for help. This is a thing, we feel like we're not allowed to ask for help, and we can't be in pain, and we can't admit to our own selves that we're struggling, and you know what, we are all struggling. We're all struggling, we all have moments of crippling self-doubt and there's someone who will understand you, I promise. Reach out. There are people who will get it and that's the beautiful about theatre, is that you will feel gotten, you will.</b></p>   |
| DR MALKA        | <p>But that's great advice for everything, because I think most women, never mind in the acting space, that a lot of people kind of shape and frame their identities about the work that they do, because we spend or intend to spend so much of our life dedicated to a field.</p>  |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <p><b>To the other. Most women are dedicated to let's say their children, their spouses, the home environment, and you know what I'm realizing is that there are a lot of women who are forgetting themselves and then your identity becomes constituted by what you're doing and you're not really focusing on who you are. What's this? What do you want, what do you need, what are your desires, your dreams, your ambitions, your fears? I think as women we should constantly be asking ourselves, not to tear ourselves down but to be curious, what am I hiding away from. What am I scared to really get behind when I remove this little component of my identity. Identity fascinates me, that's why acting fascinates me, because it is all about the identity of the other. So, I think self-awareness and I think you have to be prepared to face yourself and that's why I like walking. I really face myself on that road. I know a lot of people tell me it's very dangerous and you know what, life is dangerous, I could step off the sidewalk with grocery bags and get hit by a bus. I don't want to live my life in fear, I really don't. I have enough fear being an actor, being like when am I going to work again, I don't need more fear.</b></p> |
| DR MALKA        | <p>I think this has been a great therapy session, that's for sure, but such important aspects of learnings, of thinking about your own identity and thinking about yourself and not in a selfish way, but acknowledging that you are person, you are valued, and I think everyone needs to hear that.</p>  |

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| SHANNON<br>ESRA | Yes, and only we can value ourselves. We tell people how valuable we are. So, if you believe that you are worthless, you are going to be treated like you are worthless, it's very hard. It's very hard.  |
| DR. MALKA       | And we see such a lot of that playing out in the women's space.   |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | Sadly, we do, yes, we really do.  |
| DR. MALKA       | Thinking about values and aspects of how we portray ourselves, what would you say have been some of the gender challenges that you've experienced in your industry, whether that's from a pay point of view, taking on particular roles or being rejected from roles because of who you are and what would be your advice to women who are potentially wanting to go through in your footsteps, but if they have some pearls of wisdom they'd come into a little bit more prepared?   |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <b>So, the first thing I want to say is don't go in my footsteps, go in your own. March to the beat of your own drum, don't try and ever compare yourself to someone else's career. I think it is important to have a role model and I think it is very important to have someone that you look up to, but your journey is really going to be your journey and I think that comparison is the absolute death of us. It is a natural thing to do to compare ourselves to other, but I think everybody's journey is going to be unique and you are going to have your own unique challenges, and that's good, because the challenges are going to grow you, you are going to grow in the discomfort, this is important to do just in humanity. What have been my challenges as a woman in my career, I mean you know early on in my career there were some very uncomfortable, sexually charged, you know, things that were deeply inappropriate and being young I didn't know any better and you think that this is the boss and I have to do what he says. Thankfully this MeToo movement and these different awarenesses has curtailed that to a large degree, we do have different organizations like SWIFT that are there, we now have intimacy coaches so that we can avoid these kinds of things from happening. Yes, from a pay point I mean I see how men will still make more money, I don't know how this is quantified or justified, I don't know, but for me personally I don't think this has anything to do with my gender, but my experience is that I find that a lot of people lack imagination. So, based on their assumption of me or their perception of me, they have already put me in a box and for me closed-mindedness is my biggest challenge, personally. I think I have been lucky but also I know I am a very strong person, I am a very strong woman and that can also be very intimidating, but so much of my strength has also been part of my toolkit to protect myself, because underneath all of this, believe me, I'm mulch, but you know and I'm very scared to be vulnerable in front of people. I am terrified because I have been in relationships where I have shown vulnerability and I have broken down and they have completely rejected me for being not the version that they signed up for, that I must be strong and I must be this attractive, strong entity and so for me being vulnerable is a real challenge because I don't trust that people will love me when I am. So, you know, my challenges have been my own limitations.</b> |
| DR. MALKA       | It's interesting when you talk about people's perceptions, because I think that if someone sees you in a particular frame or even if you are younger, say a   |

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|                          | teenager, and then as you evolve and you change, that people form a perception of you and they are reluctant to let that perception go, although that perception is just one view of your identity and it may be something that you've passed through completely and you're not that same person.  |
| <b>SHANNON<br/>ESRA</b>  | <b>I read something the other day and I am going try remember; 'I am not who you think I am, I am who you think you are.</b>   |
| DR. MALKA                | Anaïs Nin, her quote is something like; we don't see the world as it is, we see the world as we are.   |
| <b>SHANNNON<br/>ESRA</b> | <b>We see it as we are, and I mean God bless Anaïs, but I mean someone's perception of me is not about me, it's about them and it comes with a huge amount of consciousness, it comes with a huge amount of work, it comes with a huge detachment from someone else validating you. That's why I say self-love, self-compassion, self-worth, self-esteem; there's a self in front of everything, you've got to know who you are because you are the only person who can give yourself that self-love, that self-worth, that self-compassion, self-care. So, I think the responsibility does rest on you, the me, but someone's perception of me, it's like Coco Channel says; what you think of me is none of my business.</b>   |
| DR. MALKA                | Beautiful. Love it. I think you've shared some really powerful elements, not just about your career journey, but deep insights into the self and for women to recognize and appreciate their own value and self-worth.   |
| <b>SHANNON<br/>ESRA</b>  | <b>So, this is one of my favourite topics, so I tell you, we could go on for hours.</b>  |
| DR. MALKA                | I wish we could, I really do.  |
| <b>SHANNNON<br/>ESRA</b> | <b>We will just have to do another one of these.</b>   |
| DR. MALKA                | Yes, we do, and I think there's a lot more topics to explore as we were discussing offline.  |
| <b>SHANNON<br/>ESRA</b>  | <b>Where would we start. I think it's important to have these conversations. We've got to lean in, we're going to have the conversations, because with that kind of awareness, that's where the healing begins.</b>  |
| DR. MALKA                | So, as we wrap up in terms of that section, given all of your experiences, given what you've been through; what would be the one thing that you would recommend to younger women as they are about embark on their life journey, as fundamentals, as things to work on now, that are going to advantage them in the future?  |
| <b>SHANNON<br/>ESRA</b>  | <b>Don't let society define you. Know who you are without all the noise. There are so many systemic things that are working against us. For me, self-work is the most important thing. Journal. Ask yourself questions, be curious about why you make the choices you make, what is informing it. To know thyself is to thine own self be true. Know yourself without everybody else's opinions, without the noise, who are you, what do you need, what do you desire, what do you want and don't compromise those for someone else because they said you shouldn't have it. It is a very difficult thing, it's so difficult and I am speaking as if it's something that I just do. It's work. It is work every single day and it comes with practice and the more you practice it the better you're going to get. So, know who you are. Know who you are. And you know what the thing is; you're perfect as you are and you will be exactly on time and you will say why didn't I know that then, because you know it now, don't ask why, it is how</b> |

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|                 | <b>do I move forward, how can I be present now in who I am. Don't worry about the past, don't worry about the future, focus now. We spend too much time on either side and not enough time being present.</b>   |
| DR. MALKA       | I think that is very, very powerful; living in the now, because you can't undo what's already been done.  |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <b>You can't fix it and you can't go and start thinking about it, you don't know what's going to happen next. Now, that is it, that is all we have. Nothing else is promised to us, nothing belongs to us, to take a line from a play; "It is a permanent fix on the impermanence of it all."</b>   |
| DR. MALKA       | A permanent fix on the impermanence of it all.  |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <b>She is speaking about the scar from her mastectomy. It is a permanent fix on the impermanence of it all and that is life. It is temporary, it is on loan, it is impermanent. Live now. That's it, that's all we've got.</b>  |
| DR. MALKA       | Very powerful. Shannon, what is next for you?   |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <b>I don't know. I don't know, we'll see. We'll see. Look, we are doing EdFest. We are going to take My Left Breast to Edfest, my dream is to go to Edinburgh, I would like to take this to festivals around the world. It will also give me an opportunity to go to Scotland, my grandmother was from Scotland, I have never been, and I would love to go, I believe I've got family over there and I'd love to meet them. So, for me I just want to keep telling stories and I'm going to find a way and the universe, and I will just conspire together in the background and in the meantime, I just be present, I walk, I spend time with the people that I love, and I do the things that I love.</b> |
| DR. MALKA       | Great, thank you very much for joining us today.  |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <b>Thank you so much, this was so lovely!</b>   |
| DR MALKA        | It's been a real pleasure having you on the show, I loved all the insights that you've shared, not just within your workspace, but far beyond, so it's been great to host you and we wish more uptime than downtime!  |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <b>Well, thank you, but listen I really, this interview, not to be trite, but I am because you are. You ask just beautiful questions that evoke these kinds of answers, so it's not all me, believe me, it's you.</b>   |
| DR. MALKA       | Well, thank you for being my vessel.  |
| SHANNON<br>ESRA | <b>You're welcome, thanks for filling me up with some water.</b>  |
|                 | <b>PROGRAMME END</b>  |
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