

Wake Up Call

My Journey: Overcoming Adversity with Infinite Grace



Yvonne Busisiwe Kgame

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There is no best definition of describing what happens when you are faced with death. The only way is to tap into your own unique experience of awareness – Yvonne Kgame

Seven years ago, I was faced with a life-threatening illness, yearned with living faith for the unseen and the unknown which ultimately purified my life and brought deeper vision and meaning. I am a living example of a transformed soul as I now live my life driven by unshakeable faith, **breathing new life**. This is a journey using breath to bring my body in union with my spirit and in turn my spirit in union with my Creator.

Despite undiagnosed pain in my left ear and ill-health caused by diabetes which had been diagnosed in September 1991 (before the birth of my youngest son, Katlego who was born on 14 November 1991), pain had been my constant companion. I am a leader in authentic storytelling and high ranking executive at the SABC and an experienced Senior Secondary Teacher, Commissioning Editor, Publisher, Researcher and an Editorial Specialist. On the evening of Friday, 14 June 2007, however, my life took an unexpected and dramatic turn when I rushed myself to hospital with a suspected stroke. I was given a bleak prognosis for the massive rare Glomous Jugulare tumour that was discovered in my left middle ear - the cause of my stroke –was inoperable and life-threatening. After the initial shock, panic, disbelief and soul searching, I turned to silence, and started breathing....

Let me take you back a little. It was sunset on Friday 14th June 2007 and I was going about my business as usual and had just completed a three-day strategy session with my colleagues from the SABC at Emerald Resort and Casino in Vanderbijlpark. Like everyone else I was so looking forward to going home. All I wanted to do was relax in a bubble bath, sleep in my fresh white linen and spend a lovely weekend with my family.

But unbeknownst to me, The Creator had other plans. He arranged an encounter of an intimate kind and no time is better than the present. My body felt foreign - like it was on its own mission. As I was driving back home on the N1 North Highway, the left side of my body and my neck suddenly became numb, my left eye was noticeably slack. The intense pain was beyond anything I have ever experienced. I instinctively knew that this was a significant moment for me. It was very clear to me that I was no longer going home to my family, my weekend plans and my favourite menus. I instead had a serious appointment with God.

But in a strange kind of way, with all this happening, I didn't panic. I definitely felt a mysterious and all-encompassing calming energy around me. I like to think that at that moment, Angels were surrounding me, protecting me with love and light. It was as if every decision and action that transpired was of another force. I took the off-ramp at Rivonia Road and drove myself straight to the Sunninghill Hospital. I managed, with great difficulty, to get out of my car and walked into the hospital in my high heels.

The initial diagnosis was a double stroke, but a brain scan revealed a dark cloud of blood in my brain. The definition of a stroke is when there is sudden death of brain cells due to a lack of oxygen when the blood flow to the brain is impaired by blockage or rupture of an artery to the brain. Symptoms of a stroke depend on the area of the brain affected. The most common symptom is weakness or paralysis of one side of the body with partial, in my case this was on the left hand side of my body or complete loss of voluntary movement or sensation in a leg or arm. There can be speech problems and weak face muscles, causing drooling. Numbness or tingling is very common. A stroke involving the base of the brain can affect balance, vision, swallowing, breathing and even unconsciousness. A stroke is a medical emergency. However, as I was to discover later, this stroke was only the tip of an enormous iceberg.

After numerous tests, I found out that the cause of the stroke was a massive tumour – a *Glomous Jugulare Tumour*. Arising from the glomous bodies located within the ear this tumour was slow-growing and very vascular. At this point, I must mention that for many years I had been consulting with many doctors regarding my ear, and at this stage I had lost a significant part of my hearing in my left ear and this also affected my sense of balance. This type of tumour occurs rarely with an estimated annual incidence of 1 case per 1.3 million people. This revelation shocked doctors and surgeons alike and it left my family reeling. Logic and science pointed to the fact that this could not be reversed; only faith and **God's** intervention could remedy this.

At the time, several medical options were explored but the conclusion was that the tumour was untouchable as it was located in a very delicate and dangerous area far too close to my brain. The doctors suggested that it would be better for me to go home and spend the time I had left on earth with my family. The ENT Surgeon, **Dr Rogan Pillay** assessed my condition and subsequently made the decision that surgery was not an option. He requested that when I left the hospital I should contact him for an informal talk. I duly met with him and he expressed his surprise and dismay at the fact that I was still alive – he wondered aloud what exactly was keeping me alive.

Dr Pillay requested that, with my permission, he would like to do some research into my condition. I remember feeling light and at peace with my future, whatever it would bring. For 2 months, Dr Pillay consulted with his peers. His research culminated into a seminar held at Wits University where my condition was discussed at length by top brain, neurological, heart and ENT surgeons as the tumour impacts on all these aspects of my body.

After this, Dr Pillay contacted me to tell me that the best intervention would be Radio Surgery which is a Stereotactic radiosurgery (SRS) that treats brain disorders with a precise delivery of a single, high dose of radiation. Focused radiation beams are delivered to a specific area of the brain to treat abnormalities, tumors or functional disorders. Stereotactic Radiosurgery works the same way as all other forms of radiation treatment. It does not remove the tumor or lesion, but it distorts the DNA of the tumor cells. The cells then lose their ability to replicate and retain fluids. The tumour reduction occurs at the rate of normal growth for the specific tumor cell. The shrinking of a tumor or closing off of a vessel occurs over a period of time. For benign tumors and vessels, this will usually be 18 months to two years. Radiation treatments affect all cells that are targeted. This means where normal healthy cells are targeted along with tumor cells, there will be injury to the healthy cells. Acute reactions occur during or immediately after radiation. They are normally caused by swelling and can be easily controlled with medications. Delayed or late reactions are normally permanent and can be progressive. They can vary from mild to severe and may include decreased intellect, memory impairment, confusion, personality changes among other changes. All symptoms would be dependent on the amount of healthy tissue targeted with radiation.

In my case when I started the RadioSurgery, I already showed effects of the stroke – a skewed face and a weak and numb left side, my left eye couldn't close and I couldn't smile from the damage. Over and above this the RadioSurgery added loss of hair, my hair turned grey, my left eye watered all the time and I had the most excruciating pain on the left side of my skull (just behind my ear). It was so sore that I felt like my head was going to explode. Through the Art of Living, breathing helped me deal with the pain and with time, it subsided.

Miraculously during this time, the effects of the stroke began to heal itself and no further complications presented themselves. I attribute my healing to my undying faith, my will to live, the medical interventions I underwent as well as the alternative methods of healing that I practiced. One of the greatest gifts I received from my illness is that I was afforded an opportunity to go deeper within, and therein I found the gift of forgiveness.

The Impact on my Family

Peter Kgame (Husband)



It was the worst of times... to be told that my wife might be dying anytime soon is a numbing experience. That's how I felt when the doctors indicated that it might be best to "make her as comfortable as possible to face the inevitable". From then on, it has been an amazing journey... and that amazing journey is at the centre of this fascinating story. Today we walk together as a tightly woven unit. In times of turmoil and confusion we have learnt to count our blessings... one by one.

Thokozane Kgame (Eldest)



“Hi boy, how are you? I am at Sunninghill Hospital, they are taking me to ICU but don’t worry I am fine”

These are the words I heard from my mother on the night of 15 June 2007. My whole world and life at that moment came to a complete slow down as I tried to make sense of how someone could be going into ICU but be ‘OK’ at the same time? That drive with my wife was the slowest I have ever taken on the highway in my life as I could not get to grips with what I had just heard.

On arrival at the hospital I was clouded with a lot of confusion as I had tried over and over to picture the condition my mother would be in when I arrived. The sight of her chatting and being herself confused me even more.

It was not until we got back home with my brothers and father that I began to come to reality with what had happened and trying to figure out from firsthand experience how you deal with a stroke patient more so if it is your mother. Is she going to be completely bed ridden? Is this the end of daily life routines as we had gotten used to? Questions of how life would be from thereon started creeping in and doubts and fear and some anger start kicking into overdrive.

The worst though for us in terms of the diagnosis still lay ahead. On the 18th of June the digestion of the stroke was made even more uncomfortable by the disclosure of the glomus tumour which was growing in her head and the dumbfounded and concerned looks on the doctor’s face made this an even more frightening experience as the truth about this monster we facing was about to come to the fore.

The internet is a great source of knowledge but in this instance it seemed like the hand that twists the dagger once it has been pushed so deep that there is no more flesh to penetrate.

When mother was discharged from the hospital to go home and rest as the medical experts did not have any answers to deal with this 'problem'. It was probably the most ambiguous day of my life. I did not know whether to rejoice for she was alive and here today and the fact that she was doing reasonably well for a double stroke patient or to be mad at the world because we had just been effectively told she must go home and prepare for her death which was a clear and present companion.

What that moment did for me though was to bring me more to the present and to date I cannot ever recall being more present in my life with anyone as I was with my mother during the days of uncertainty as I took it upon myself to make the most of the days we had and experience each moment fully with her. That period has built such a solid and honest foundation for the relationship I share with her today as there was nothing to lose but so much to gain and love about the people we were. My brothers and I with our father had never been closer as we were all faced with the same challenge and test of faith filled with uncertainty and whole lot of love that we might never have experienced with so much depth had we not been challenged with the prospect of planning for our mother's death. The memory of being with her after her radiation therapy treatments reinforces the strength and resilience that she had and how even when visibly physically spent she was always fighting that extra bit to be available to us and those around her. The determination she displayed to get to the end of the treatment and believing that she will beat this thing was amazing and made it so much easier for us. I have not encountered who has her faith challenged like hers and during the initial moments where acceptance was still touch and go she still had enough in the tank to never give up on life but rather she took it upon herself to live in the moment and to let it be.

This has been a tremendous journey that has just taken flight even 7 years later. I know I not only speak for myself when I say I touch and almost gob smacked by the recovery she has made and the inspiration she has touched people's lives with. She is a shining light of never giving up and being humble enough to start back at zero to find your path and being bold

enough to embrace herself for who she is and accepting that there are many paths in life but our faith and belief and intuition will always lead us to where we are meant to be, if only we take that moment to listen and believe.

Tshepo Kgame (Second Born)



It was a "pens-down" party... I received a disturbing phone call from my older brother. Thokozane asked me if I had a medical aid card, then he said "Never mind. By the way, mum is in hospital, but she will be ok". He then said that I should not come home, I can continue to enjoy the rest of my night as I was not home as I was visiting friends. I took his advice only to awake to a horror story. I was inundated with emotions and questions. Over many years, I used to drive her to appointments at Olivedale Clinic when she went for her treatments and check ups to something we didn't understand and life just continued. The first thing I thought was: "How could they?" and then I recalled my law background and drew out a mental plan on how to make the doctor pay dearly for his mistake.

By this time, the reality had not set in. I was still blinded by rage and revenge. It all came to a halt when I saw my mother in her death-bed (state of rebirth). Her face was lopsided, consistent with a stroke. This is only something I was used to seeing in the movies. My mind was fighting my heart as to the possible outcome of this event. I got even more frustrated when I had to share my visiting hour with other individuals. Then it struck me, my mum's life had touched many others. No matter who or what you have done to her, she will

invite you into her house. I remember having a dream about the surgery that didn't take place. The doctor attempted to drive the scalpel into my mum's head and the blade broke. For me it signified the fact that she was not going to be operated on. I expressed this dream to her whilst she was ill. I couldn't afford to let her receive negative vibes from me, so I learned to love unconditionally. I underwent most of the healing processes as my mum - it was both enlightening and painful. Breaking through my own barriers always is.

The biggest gift for me if there is one thing I know that my mother loved with all her heart was her profession, her work and service – using creativity to serve and contributing to build a better world. No matter how we criticized her working hours and workspace, how she was treated and faced all sorts of challenges, audits for taking her team in large numbers to a personal transformation workshop whilst actually it was the beginning of the soul, I came to the conclusion that that is her calling and that is who she is.

Katlego Kgame (Youngest Son)



It is not necessary to re-explain what happened. The most important thing is the lesson taken from the experience. Growing up I did not get the opportunity to spend a great deal of time with mom. It began to become very taxing and I missed her more and more after each trip. It began to show in my school work and sports. Then the whole stroke thing happened and everything made a complete turnaround. We became closer than ever and spends lots of time together having fun. Sort of like best friends but just better. Personally, that was the best thing to come out of this. I guess I can consider it a blessing in disguise.

Ntsiki Kgame (Daughter in law)



Ntsiki Kgame (nee Adonisi)

I met Mom Yvonne for the first time at Thokozane's 21st Birthday Dinner. From that day I became her daughter..... I asked her if she knew who my mother was because previously I had taken Thokozane's text book home and a photo of Mom Yvonne was in the book. My late mom saw the photo and asked me what Yvonne's photo was doing in my book? "She is still so beautiful" she said and I told her it is Toto's mom.

On 14 June 2007, my nephew was born and I was so excited, I told Thokozane to meet me at the Garden City Hospital to see the new born. After the hospital visit on Friday (15 June 2007) Thokozane followed me home and as I parked the car in the garage, he said "baby I just received a call from my mother and she said they are taking her to ICU but she is fine". Thokozane looked like he had just seen a ghost so I told him we needed to be at the hospital because there is no way she could be fine and be taken to ICU. Thokozane insisted that he should drive, he was driving at a snail's pace, and all I wanted was to get to the hospital and see if she was ok. We arrived at the hospital and saw mom's face, she was chatting and I realised that her left side of the face looked odd. I tried so much not to show any emotion and she said to me everything would be fine and why did I look so worried???? The nurses were so amazed that she drove herself to the hospital and walked in, in high heels!!!!

Mom Yvonne is a miracle and my doubts on the Higher Power were erased instantly. She fought for her life; she was so calm and sound while doing it. She was more concerned about her family and

friends and did not focus on her tumour. The one night at the hospital she told me to take care of her boys. I remember that evening I totally broke down as I was speaking to one of her sisters, Pinky.

One positive thing about this illness is that it brought the family closer; I had never seen the family so close and working together as a team. Usually I would get to the house and everyone would be doing their own thing, watching TV in their bedrooms and suddenly they sat together and spoke and supported each other through this difficult time. It made me appreciate the people in my life and learnt the lesson that you say everything that you have to say while the person is still alive. Thokozane was the calmest I had seen him, I got so worked up because I was just waiting for him to breakdown. Thokozane and the mom are so close, they are best friends. "My thoughts were TK cannot afford to lose his mother, because I lost my mother in 2004 and it sucks! So to see him so strong, positive and focused, really inspired me to have more positive thoughts and send the right positive energy at all times.

We had a prayer meeting at their house and everyone that attended looked so drained and teary-eyed. Mom Yvonne thanked everyone for their prayers and with confidence said "I am healed" for me that was the most profound moment. To see a woman that had been told to go home and say goodbye to her family in preparation for the inevitable death. She had so much faith and courage. She is healed and now she is healing other people. What a beautiful soul, my mother, a mother to all nations



Yvonne Busisiwe Kgame (2008 – post RadioSurgery)

Sometime in early 2006, just before I was to get my Moment of Grace with my maker, a Commissioning Editor within the SABC Content Hub (where I was the General Manager at the time) named **Anu Nepal** told me about the **Art of Living Foundation** and encouraged me to attend their breathing classes. I scoffed at the thought and doubtfully told her that I could never take so much time off work for a silly course like learning to breathe. Little did I know that the Art of Living would contribute to dramatically changing my life and is the centre of my miraculous healing. This was compounded by the surgeons which was a conclusion which was arrived at by the surgeons who. Let me pause at this juncture to express my deepest gratitude to Anu for being my beacon of light and for alerting me to my call of time and I am glad I did heed the call.

I was destined to meet **Vanishree Pavadai** who is a Senior Faculty Member at the Art of Living. She is an amazing teacher, healer, mentor and friend who inspires, energises, focuses, directs and guides my life.

In 1998, Vani's life suddenly changed when she came in contact with World leader and Humanitarian Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, founder of the Art of Living Foundation. Inspired by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, she left her promising corporate career to volunteer her life to set up the Art of Living foundation in Southern Africa, and teach the Art of Living programs in Africa. Since then, she has touched the lives of thousands of people through her teachings and is beacon of strength and light to many. The Art of Living Foundation is an international non-profit educational, charitable, and humanitarian organisation, which is dedicated to serving society by strengthening the individual. This is done by offering programmes that eliminate stress, create a sense of belonging, restore human values, and encourage people from all backgrounds, religions and cultural traditions to come together in celebration and service. The Art of Living's programmes, projects and teachings have benefited more than 370 million people in over 152 countries across the globe. Meeting Vani taught me to believe in myself, face every moment in life as a new opportunity – a chance for me to grow and make a mark with full knowledge that I have the ability to succeed in all that I do. I now believe in myself with deep understanding and humility and acceptance that I can make light from the dark.

When doubts set in, I turn round and leave with a conviction that is strong and true. I have come to an understanding that few people face with courage all that life gives them. At that moment, I felt that I had so much to live for I forgot that I was dying. I made an emphatic decision and I chose life.. I attend Part I course of Art of Living and by the end of the week-long program, inexplicably, my balance had returned, I could 'almost smile' and my symptoms from the stroke had improved by almost 70%. My boys kept saying the 'old I' is back! I continued with the breathing practice I'd learned on the course everyday without fail. To date, I have not skipped a day since 28 October 2007. My latest scan shows that there is miraculous recovery of all the post-stroke and tumour trauma. 70% of my hearing has returned, my cranial nerves have recovered, my hair has grown back, my diabetes has disappeared – my endocrine specialist Dr Bhana has put me on an annual check up just to monitor me.

As I am mastering the art of living, the destination is never a place but new growth and development so I do breathing every morning and go for breathing practice every Monday and attend Satsang (knowledge and Sanskrit chanting) as frequently as I can. I have also found much deeper passion in completing service – something I have always done but revere much more now – it brings me strength and renewal. While I have amazed myself and my family about the extent to which I repeat my courses, I draw a different kind of energy each time, there is a paradigm shift for me, deeper healing, new knowledge and the beam of light radiates more brightly each time I complete a course.

I enjoy the company of truth so I am delighted by all the breathtaking moments and being part of a wonderful journey with all the beautiful soul mates that I encounter each time I go. Most importantly, my moments of Grace and Gratitude go out to all those who have touched my life in many ways. I also bow to light and acknowledge the Divine through a morning prayer that I was taught when I was growing up by my mother and grandmother, both devoutly faithful women who had pure intimate relationships with their God. Three weeks later after my first part 1 course, I went to my scheduled medical appointment and my stunned doctor told me that the tumour had disintegrated! I then went on an advanced Art of Living course which offers deeper meditation techniques and after completing this, much

of my hearing returned. After seven long months, in February 2008 I drove myself back to work in good health, which I continue to enjoy today.

I express with deep faith and gratitude that prior to trauma, a wise and worthy mirror of my soul journey was reflected through what I call 'sacred encounters' with very interesting, enlightened beings who gave me all the wisdom, courage and light to face the challenge of healing with courage, strength, acceptance, calmness, faith and hope.

I would also like to express my deep gratitude and recognise the role that my family played in my journey to healing. My sincere appreciation and love goes to my husband Mr Peter Kgame and my three sons, Thokozani, Tshepo and Katlego. I can only imagine how terrifying it must have been for them that there was a strong possibility that I would not be with them for much longer. But through all of that, they showed such bravery, resilience and love. I also need to acknowledge my extended family, friends and colleagues for their prayers and support throughout my ordeal.

Like any mother and parent, you would like to be there when your children reach certain milestones. At some stage after my illness and when the doctor's sent me home to spend my last days with my family, it broke my heart when I realised that there was a strong possibility that I would never see my children reach their milestones. But today I am proud to share with you that I was present when my youngest son Katlego matriculated in 2009, who by the way, attributes his inspiration and strength to Part 1 of the Art of Living Course which he has also attended. Another blessing was to see my second born child, Tshepo graduating in 2010 and Thokozani, my first born child, getting married in 2009. In June 2008, I also managed to fulfil my father in laws wish to bury him. Interestingly, his death occurred almost a year to the day after my stroke. All these were special moments for me which I will forever cherish and am grateful for.

Over and above the healing that I have experienced, there are other added benefits that I have gained from attending the various Art of Living Courses, such as the fact that my creativity has been deepened. As I speak, I am in the process of writing my first book and a

film regarding my illness has been produced and broadcast on national television in South Africa. My weight issues are now resolved. I now live a very balanced lifestyle and have stopped being a slave to my work. I now realise that I spent many years running away from myself but my stroke and the tumour gave me the opportunity to once again get in touch with myself and reunite with my soul.

Yvonne also felt the grace when she met Guruji in passing and was humbled when he invited her to attend the Business Ethics Conference at the European Parliament 2008 - 2010. This has fulfilled her dream to share her story with young people from over 50 countries around the world. An opportunity that has allowed her to learn and grow as a person.

There's no doubt in my mind that my healing was due to unequivocal faith, my will to live, the medical interventions I underwent and the alternative methods of healing and prayer that I practiced and allowed myself to receive from across the globe. Many people become so involved with trying to cope with catastrophic events that they tend to shut themselves down at these times, but I opened myself up to the love and support that I was surrounded with. I surrendered myself to breath. I believe that this played a major role in my recovery along with the power of silence and my humility in letting go, in surrendering to the infinite and eternal Source. WOW: great holistic, integrated solutions that enable us to master the art of Living that I can proudly say that I am a beneficiary of are:

Physical health benefits

- Reduces stress
- Improves health and well-being
- More energy
- Strengthens immune system
- Reduces cholesterol levels

Mental health benefits

- Greater creativity
- Greater clarity of mind
- Improves sleep
- Enhances brain function
- Improves ability to manage challenging situations

Improved interpersonal relations

- More ease, joy and harmony in personal and work relationships
- A deeper sense of community
- Increases awareness both of self and surroundings
- Improves patience
- Increases confidence and self-esteem

Psychological benefits

- Relieves depression and anxiety
- Relief from anxiety and depression (mild, moderate, and severe)

Spiritual benefits

- Enhances yoga and meditation practices
- Experience a deep inner peace of mind

This experience taught me never to give way to discouragement or doubt and to find in Thee new Courage, Light, Strength, Wisdom and Fearlessness. I live this day bravely with faith and Gratitude.

I also tried alternative healing options such as:

- Violet light healing
- Vibrational Medicine
- Sound Therapy
- Oxygen Therapy
- Spiritual Healing
- Emotional Freedom Techniques
- Indian Healing Massage
- Emotional and Physical Journey
- Body Talk Therapy
- Chinese Healing Therapy

At this moment I endeavour to create Beauty, Harmony and Perfection. In all areas of my life, I understand fully that **my body is not a monument** that will last forever - when my purpose on planet earth is complete I will die gracefully. There is no need to fear - the Lord God will lead us and protect us every moment and every moment of every moment!!!!!!!
Let us accept and find peace that our lives have their seasons and we too are a part of the natural world.

Recovery to Discovery

This is not a formula or defined prescription to healing what ails you but it is an open invitation for exploration for what may work for you and to inspire you to listen to your gut and inner voice to discover alternative healing solutions.

Living in Faith: Is critical to anyone's life or journey to healing is faith. But what is faith? According to Jason Blume faith is trusting and believing in a power we can neither see nor touch. It's a feeling born deep within our hearts that keeps us holding on even when we feel all our strength is gone. Faith is a promise of hope that whispers, "You'll be okay..." even through the darkest times, and it fills us with power we could never find on our own. It is a bridge between your heart and God. I wish you faith that fills you with peace and contentment – and grows even stronger with each passing day.

Embracing the Power of Intention: Why should God assist me and what is my Purpose... If I understand that what I think I manifest, then I know that my thinking would need to fundamentally change when faced with such odds in life.

Accepting: Facing the problem at hand head on and don't hide from the truth.

Being intuitive: The inner voice speaks to you and all you need to do is hear it and trust it...Often we shy away from it as we cannot face it.

Listening: Important for patients to always cooperate with doctors and to listen to what they say but also share with the doctor what you are going through and where the aches and pains are. In my case, they were concentrating on the blood clots rather than the real issue – the source was the tumor... So the lessons were that as medical staff it was important for them to listen to their patients and hear their stories. Also you may need to face the reality of

the condition and the possibility of death. Thus the key lesson is that whilst the body can wither, the soul is eternal...

Understanding the side effects: I had to be aware of the side effects of the radiation therapy but we must also consider the side effects of medication that we take. A full body assessment must be done of the whole body because it is interconnected; it is not one area of the body that needs to be cured

Observing: Patients need the space to heal and be aware of self healing methods. Medical personnel must query if they are having a positive impact on patients

Receiving: The gift of receiving help and guidance without judgment and offloading all pain, anger, grudges that is within one... When I was ill I took guidance and help from all sources without bias or prejudice; from all faiths and paths as well as using music as a tool for healing. You must be open to all possibilities...

Meditating: I found my best healing tool to be the power of silence. I meditated twice every day in the early hours and at night. When we meditate, we still our mind and tranquilise our heart. It helps us to discover our inner wisdom and treasures. I discovered that when we pray God listens and answers our prayers and when we are still, God talks and directs us. We must just listen.

Eating healthily: You are what you eat and you must know your blood group so you eat according to what works for your body because a healthy body equals a healthy mind. What is critical is to eat according to what you have been diagnosed with.

Exercising: I was never one for exercise but have found ways of moving my body that I enjoy like dancing, walking and yoga.

Having Fun: Do the things that you like and enjoy most. In my case, reading and writing was key as well as listening to music and enjoying nature and the ocean. I am also vigilant about service to others.

Laughing: According to www.care2.com, laughter has the following benefits:

- Lower blood pressure
- Increase vascular blood flow and oxygenation of the blood
- Give a workout to the diaphragm and abdominal, respiratory, facial, leg, and back muscles
- Reduce certain stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline
- Increase the response of tumor- and disease-killing cells such as Gamma-interferon and T-cells
- Defend against respiratory infections—even reducing the frequency of colds—by immunoglobulin in saliva.
- Increase memory and learning; in a study at Johns Hopkins University Medical School, humor during instruction led to increased test scores
- Improve alertness, creativity, and memory

I have a positive attitude and laugh every day!

Praying: Prayer gives me an opportunity to connect with God and receive His love and grace and to have an authentic conversation without hiding and being fearful. It is a wonderful opportunity to forgive myself and others.

Being Grateful: Keeping a journal of positive experiences has been found to improve moods and have other positive effects. I write in my Gratitude Journal every day.

Being Aware: You need to know your family history so you can be aware of what you may contract.

Taking Responsibility: I have discovered that you can't run away from yourself. You must face your challenges head on and know that this too shall pass....and we can only manage to change what we can.

Do you know...

- If your diet is balanced?
- What your iron level is??
- What your pulse rate is?
- What your body weight is?
- What your blood group is?
- What your blood pressure is?
- What your cholesterol level is?
- What your platelets status is?
- What your prostate status is?
- What your mammogram status is?
- What your insulin / glucose levels are?
- What the health history of your family is?
- If you have any unusual growths or moles?
- If that persistent cough is something to worry about?
- Do you know your HIV status and that of your partner?
- If there are any psychological illnesses that run in your family?
- What your Body Mass Index is (weight aligned to your height)?
- If you have any allergies and what their effects on your health is?
- If you have any addictions, their sources and available interventions?
- If you are drinking enough water daily? This doesn't include sparkling water.
- If there are any chronic diseases and genetic anomalies that run in your family?
- What the status is of your vital internal organs (skin, brain, heart, kidneys, liver, large intestine, lungs, pancreas, stomach)?

Ten Keys of Healing

G R E A T D R E A M

Giving

Relating

Exercising

Appreciating

Trying Out

Direction

Resilience

Emotion

Acceptance

Meaning

Source: actionforhappiness.org

Remember 5 Simple Rules

1. Free your heart from hatred-forgive and move on.
2. Free your mind from worries - most never happen and if they do, you will handle it the best way you can.
3. Live simply and appreciate what you have-the secret is wanting what you have not having what you want.
4. Give as much back as you can without expecting anything in return-it will all come back to you.
5. Expect less from people that way you are never disappointed....

My Mantra

Nolitha's: 12

Nurture

Observe

Listen

Inspire

Trust

Hope

Act

Serve

NO = Isixhosa means "A Mother" e.g. Nolitha is "Mother of Light"

As we travel forward together

We can never do enough to seize the power of knowledge and wisdom to engage, enrich and touch lives. I am a miraculous survivor of a stroke which is the highest killer of men and women in South Africa. I was diagnosed many years ago with diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and then the subsequent tumour and I have been healed from all of these illnesses. I understand the pain that people go through and I know that we can use the power of our own knowledge and wisdom to heal ourselves and then to serve others with passion to encourage zest for life. My journey has been an amazing marriage between science and spirituality however we each have our own special journey to travel. My book is not a prescription to health, it is just about my own personal journey. Any treatments should be explored in consultation with medical doctors.

The only 2 things in life that are certain is change and death. Our bodies are not monuments and we will pass on one day but we should remember that our souls will live forever. When we live fully we will die gracefully. In some ways we can actually be friends with death – we should not fear it – we should live each day like it is our last with faith and zest. I was declared terminal however my zest for life encouraged me to keep going and to continue having extraordinary presence, for life can be cut short by anything else. Education and health is the wealth of every nation and information is power – we need to weave zest for life to anchor respect for life.

Why I decided to document my journey

- 1) It is a spontaneous spiritual calling - what is critical is how you answer the call
- 2) It is an opportunity to inspire the telling of my own authentic story as we are all authors and artists of our own lives
- 3) It is a time for delving deep inside myself and letting go so the truth could heal. When we go through a tapestry of pain, anger, rejection, fear, disillusionment and regrets we discover at the same time the hidden pearls of grace, joy, love, peace, happiness understanding, knowledge, power, wisdom and genius
- 4) Telling stories inspires other souls to have the courage to author their own stories in their own organic voices. It's an eternal gift and a thought memory that will live beyond my years and live forever – stories never die
- 5) When I began to tell my story, I discovered peace within myself which elevated me to a higher consciousness and I had a deeper awareness and understanding that I am life, I are light, I are love! This state is not a state of superiority or elitist, a state of being special nor is it a state of being better than the next person, nor does it put you on a pedestal. It is rather a state of awareness of who you are. It is an enabler that aligns you when you go off track. Put simply it is angelic consciousness because there is a purity and an angel inside all of us. Consciousness reiterates that there is an angel in all of us. It reminds us of the spirit of *Ubuntu*: "That I am because you are, you are because we are. Unless you are I cannot be. We are one.

- 6) It was a time to heal my own hurt and embrace blessings and gratitude. Remembering that I am worthy of love no matter what I have done or not done. God is good and with us all the time. All we need is unshakeable faith, steadfast trust and boundless belief.
- 7) I needed to open myself up to unleash blockages that was turning a deaf ear to the inner voice inside myself which is humbly pleading lovingly to be redeemed. My soul was pleading for freedom.

My book, Infinite Grace extends an invitation to the readers who are on the same road that I was will be inspired and learn from the lessons that I learnt, from my faith and courage, from the mistakes that I made and the vision I had. I trust that they will also learn from the successes and hopefully receive insight, awareness and light from the in-between moments. It is my sincere wish that as they engage my thoughts, they rediscover their own healing solutions.

...It is only the story that can continue beyond the war and the warrior. It is the story that outlives the sound of war-drums and the exploits of brave fighters. It is the story...that saves our progeny from blundering like blind beggars into the spikes of the cactus fence. The story is our escort; without it, we are blind. Does the blind man own his escort? No, neither do we the story; rather it is the story that owns us and directs us
Chinua Achebe, Anthills of the Savannah (1987)

About the Author

Yvonne Kgame is a professional with 30 years experience as a leader and senior executive in local and international print publishing and public broadcasting at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). Yvonne is also a teacher, chief examiner, mentor, inspirational speaker and researcher and is currently The Executive: Innovations and Editorial Manager of Local Content at the SABC.

During the period of South Africa's transition to democracy, Yvonne provided insightful leadership in educational broadcasting. The collective work of her and the team she led has been recognised through 150 international and local awards, and the development of strategic partnerships resulting in a number of co-productions. Among the most prestigious awards she has received are: the Peabody Award, the CBA Broadcasting Award for Outstanding Children's programmes, and four awards in Italy including the Grand Jury Prize. She was nominated for a South African Feather Award in her personal capacity. She received an award from Images and Voices of Hope, an international organisation focusing on International Dialogues for Thought Leaders in Media – Journalism.

Following her successful leadership in education broadcasting, Yvonne headed up the SABC's Content Hub, overseeing a broad spectrum of programming genres. At the apex of work in this role, she was overseeing the conceptualisation and broadcasting of more than 800 programmes. During this time her work was recognised through more than 80 local and international awards in just over two and a half years. Amongst these are: an Emmy Award of Recognition for Hosting the Semi-final round of the International Emmys; FEPACI (Pan African Federation of Filmmakers): a Recognition Award for services rendered. In August 2013 Yvonne received 3 awards: Inspiration; Vision and Modesty; Leadership as voted by SABC staff.

After her double stroke, Yvonne was appointed Executive Manager: Innovation and Editorial. In this role, she supports content houses across various media platforms which express, celebrate and affirm South African and African stories. Yvonne's passion for weaving and positioning the African tapestry in a global context represents her quest for making Africa's great stories widely known.

Yvonne's academic qualifications include a Master of Arts (University of Stellenbosch, South Africa), a Materials Development Certificate (Thames Valley University, United Kingdom), Bachelor of Arts Hons (Wits University, South Africa, 1992), a Bachelor of Arts in Education (Honours) (Wits University), Bachelor of Arts with distinction in Education (UNISA, South Africa), a Senior Secondary Teachers Diploma (Soweto College). She has recently obtained a Certificate in Occupationally Directed Education & Training Development Practices – NQF 4 (Maccauvlei Learning Academy).

Yvonne has served as a board member of various international and national boards, including: International Public Television; Basel Forum; Sithengi Board (International Film and TV Festival); Academy of Television, Arts and Sciences; Oscar Selection Committee; Chowac (Christ Haven of Workers Adult Literacy Centre) and Chief Examiner at the IEB. She is the Chair of the Board of the International Association of Human Values and is an Ambassador for United Way Worldwide.

The Books

Infinite Grace

This book, is about Yvonne Kgame's acceptance of possible death and her surrender to the Divine while simultaneously, taking full responsibility for her spiritual, emotional and physical healing. Yvonne's path towards healing the body, mind and soul is nothing short of miraculous. As her journey unfolds, a number of sacred encounters with various international and local medics, alternative healers, teachers, masters, gurus and pastors bring their love and light to carry her through the healing process. Master minded by none other than the Divine, the power and love in each of these sacred encounters leads Yvonne to an awesome experience of reawakening. She becomes conscious of God's infinite grace that has been bestowed on her.

Yvonne Kgame's story will inspire you to believe in living with purpose and have faith in your magnificence. *Infinite Grace* is a story that will take you to the edge of your own cliff and bring you back, transformed and inspired to live your authentic life. This book is an open invitation to delve deeper into yourself and find the light and grace within.

Nuggets of Hope

Time is the fourth dimension. It is real, and yet we regard it as mysterious. We prefer to leave it in the realm of the quantum physics. But it is not only physics. It is life. Time is a day, a week, a month, and a year. Yvonne Busisiwe Kgame extends her wisdom expressed in her deeply spiritual work on personal insight, the best-seller: *Infinite Grace*. She sees time in a year. She sees the year in twelve distinct months that develop the path of the spirit on its annual journey. She collects thought for every day, from her own inner exploration to the wisdom of the world's greatest thinkers. **Nuggets of Hope** is a piece of gold for every day of the year. It is the start of the day, designed to last the full day. It follows the development of the inner spirit on its daily voyage through to the start of the next day. It gives guidance that is congruent with the cycle of the year. It aligns to the numbers that count the minutes.

In *Nuggets of Hope*, Yvonne takes her remarkable personal journey and sees it as a continuity of milestones. Where *Infinite Grace* portrayed her overview of the healing power of spirituality, *Nuggets of Hope* translates the wheel of life into a straight line journey of just a year, and each year.

Nuggets of Hope is the outer collection of Yvonne's inner thoughts.

Nolitha ... Only a Mother

Only a mother experiences an undeniable connection with her child. From the moment that her body is connected to the child, the souls connect in the physical world. From the meeting of the eyes to the first touch between mother and child – the connection is infinite, eternal and can never be denied.

Nolitha ... Only a Mother is Yvonne Kgame's third work of inspiration and a pathway into joyous living.

Naked... The Infinite Joy of Peeling back the Layers: Unveiling the Mask - Drawing from the Insights of Inspired Souls

Naked... is about deep seated negative emotions that seem to continually linger. They trigger tears and cause us to wear a mask to hide our pain. Obstacles that block our path to greatness can be moved by processing hidden feelings. We must find opportunities to remove our masks so we can travel light to our final destination by being open to change, willing to let go and to delve deeper, right to the core of the pain and suffering. **Naked...** is Yvonne's gift to assist people to delve deep inside themselves to find the reasons behind hiding behind masks.

Ways to connect with Yvonne Kgame

Website: www.infinitegrace.co.za

Facebook: Infinite Grace

Twitter: @infinite_grace

And so we have to heal our Africa within. We have to re-discover the true Africa, the Africa of laughter, of joy, of originality, of improvisation, the Africa of legend, of story-telling, of playfulness, the Africa of brilliant colours, the Africa of generosity, of hospitality and kindness to strangers, the Africa of immense compassion, the Africa of wisdom, of proverbs, of divination, of paradox, the Africa of ingenuity, and surprise, the Africa of a four-dimensional attitude to time, the Africa of magic, of faith, of patience, of endurance, of a profound knowledge of nature's ways and the secret cycles of destiny

Ben Okri