

# **Let's Talk About the C Word: Navigating a cancer diagnosis and the life beyond it with Leanne Pero**

Leanne Pero discusses her experiences of life before, during and after breast cancer, and how it inspired her to advocate for herself and others like her.

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Leanne Pero is an ex-dance teacher, entrepreneur and author who was diagnosed with breast cancer five years ago. Faced with an uphill battle and the stigma of her diagnosis, Leanne felt like she had to endure her treatment alone. Now, she is a passionate advocate and the founder of an organization dedicated to empowering Black women in all aspects of life and to giving them a space to speak freely and change the narrative around cancer. We created this short film to tell the story of how Leanne moved beyond her diagnosis and used her experience to inspire change and empower others.

See more from Leanne on:

Leanne discusses how cancer impacted her identity as a woman and her refusal to let the disease define her. She describes how she took back control in parts of her life and empowers others to do the same.

Leanne on finding power and freedom in creating a space to share stories about cancer with other women and how discussing the good and the bad enables them to help one another.

The importance of the words we use when talking about cancer cannot be overstated. Leanne shares how the words she heard on her initial diagnosis invoked fear and confusion; conversely, when someone was able to explain her diagnosis to her in terms she understood, a weight was lifted off her shoulders.

When Leanne was diagnosed, she wanted to hear from others who had faced a cancer diagnosis. She stresses the importance of treating everyone individually, not making broad assumptions about those with cancer and getting to know the individual's life before, during and after a cancer diagnosis.

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