

The Peale, Baltimore

Out of the Blocks Storytelling Series

Recorded by Aaron Henkin; Photographs and Music by Wendel Patrick

Produced for the Out of the Blocks website, created by the Peale, <https://ootb.thepeale.org/>



Nilajah Brown ([00:04](#)):

Over time, holding different stones, you get to know the vibration and you get to feel how it responds to you. Right? And so rose quartz for example, is called the love stone. And we have amethyst, which is the third eye stone, which helps to also cultivate intuition. And then we have the sunstone which holds energy from the Sun. Really good for African people to have this that live in America, who don't live with the sun as much, or melanated people are not in their intended environment. And so carrying the sunstone helps to keep us balanced.

Nilajah Brown ([00:44](#)):

Nilajah Brown, Flourish Boutique, 2445 St. Paul Street. Or the name Flourish. Let's start with that. To flourish, it means to create an environment where you thrive. That's what Flourish is all about. Items that help to create a favorable environment. We have grounding incense and grounding oils. If you want to create a more vibrant space, we have citrusy things. We just have different things that support finding the frequency that works best for you.

Out of the Blocks is supported by PRX and produced with grant funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Cohen Opportunity Fund, The Hoffberger Foundation, Patricia and Mark Joseph, The Shelter Foundation, The Kenneth S Batty Charitable Trust, The Sana and Andy Brooks Family Fund, The Muse Web Foundation, and the William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund, creator of the Baker Artist Portfolios. This program is supported in part by the Maryland State Arts Council (msac.org).

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Nilajah Brown ([01:19](#)):

There is a woman in Baltimore and people would always say "Are you Noni's daughter"? and I'd be like, "No, I don't know Noni". And then one day I was in the store and this woman walked over to me and I said, "You must be Noni". And she said, "Everybody's always asking me if I'm your mother".

Nilajah Brown ([01:33](#)):

And I was like, "Same here". And so we just hug, we just squeeze each other and it was so beautiful. And she said, "I'm going to the beach. You want to come"? And so I was like, "Sure"! So we grabbed some food and we went to Virginia Beach and we stayed there for the weekend. And that was the day that changed my life, as far as eating better. Noni was, all organic. And she did yoga every morning, meditated every morning at sunrise and every evening at sunset. Agnihotra. And she just taught me about that fire, meditation. She taught me about healthy living, healthy eating, and just raising our vibrations and just living more in harmony with nature. And so that was 25 years ago. And I never went back, once you go real, you know what I'm saying?

Nilajah Brown ([02:23](#)):

It's really hard to go back. So I've vegan since that weekend and just embrace a more natural way of living since that weekend with Noni.

Aaron ([02:35](#)):

Is she still with us?

Nilajah Brown ([02:37](#)):

No. She transitioned a couple years ago. And I was going to call this Noni's Place. But I woke up one day, the day before we opened and this name Flourish came in and I was like, whoa, I love it. So it's Flourish. But in my heart, it's Noni's Place. I dedicate it to Noni.

Aaron ([02:57](#)):

Tell me what you're doing here, what you just got?

Nilajah Brown ([02:58](#)):

I'm just unpacking a order. There's an importer that goes to India and gets fabulous incense and great stuff. I'm sorry. So I want you to hear the sound of the singing bowl, which is one of my absolute favorite sounds in the world...

Nilajah Brown ([03:29](#)):

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Each chakra, which are energy centers in the body, have a different vibration. And so these singing bowls are tuned to the vibrations of the specific chakra. This is the sound of the sacred chakra...

Nilajah Brown ([03:51](#)):

And let's find our breath. Let's take three or four cleansing breaths. So what does that look like? We take a deep breath in, through our nose and let that breath go all the way down into your belly and allow the belly to open up their ribcage, begin to lift like wings of a butterfly, and continue to inhale all the way up into your shoulders and throat...

Nilajah Brown ([04:16](#)):

Okay. And when you're ready, we'll slowly open our eyes, bringing our awareness back into our common space and bringing that sense of groundedness with you.

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