

## **Almost There**

*An Emerson Collective Podcast*

Episode 3 of Almost There with guests Morgan Dixon and Vanessa Garrison: This profoundly simple act can save the lives of millions of Black women

Dwayne Betts:

I'm going to ask you all to do me a favor. Put your shoes on and get ready to go outside with me. Why? Because we're going to take a walk. I'll be in my city, you'll be in your city. We're going to try to see if we could discover some things about the importance of walking. And I'll tell you, I am doing this with a suit on and some Allen Edmond's Oxblood boots.

While we walk, you'll listen to me talk to Vanessa Garrison and Morgan Dixon, the creators of the organization GirlTrek. Their mission, to improve the health of Black women in quite a simple way, by walking. According to them it doesn't just build community, it allows you to see the community that you live in.

Morgan Dixon:

We know that when Black women walk, things change all through time. From Harriet Tubman to the bus boycotters in Montgomery, we become like the heartbeat, the breath, the neighborhood watch in sneakers, the hey auntie, the I see you out of my window and I'm a little girl and I want to do that too. And so now when Black women are walking in neighborhoods like Gary, Indiana or neighborhoods all along the American south, things are changing.

Dwayne Betts:

My name is Reginald Dwayne Betts. I'm walking here in Philadelphia and this is Almost There, a podcast from Emerson Collective.

Morgan Dixon:

I'm Morgan. I'm pulled over on the side of the road and I'm headed back to Africa this afternoon and I'm walking on the side of the freeway somewhere after Philadelphia. I'm headed to DC. I don't know, I'm about to go get some Starbucks. It's cold. I have on a beanie. I'm looking like the absolute hipster that I probably am, but although hipsters are not cool, anybody who calls himself a hipster is probably old as hell.

Dwayne Betts:

Well, it sounds like we all the same age because...

Morgan Dixon:

Listen, but I'm feeling good and Vanessa is there. How you doing, V?

Vanessa Garrison:

I'm doing good. Nice to meet you, brother. I'm walking in Washington, DC.

Dwayne Betts:

GirlTrek is fantastic and I'm really impressed by, actually that's some bullshit to tell somebody you impressed by them. I am inspired by the shit that y'all do. I didn't walk, actually, I only started walking when I got a dog. And I wonder what made you think walking was central to the health of Black women? How did this start?

Vanessa Garrison:

It's an easy question and a hard question. Walking has been used as a agent for change. It has historical context for Black people in particular. So GirlTrek started through Morgan and I having conversations. We were asking ourselves what would be the entry point for Black women to live their healthiest, most fulfilled life, if they were on the couch, if they didn't feel like they had community, if they didn't feel like they had been seen before, if they were struggling against the barriers that we know exist that keep Black women unhealthy. And so we started to speak directly to those women and ask them to take a first step towards their health and start walking in the direction of their best lives.

Dwayne Betts:

Now Morgan, I know you headed to Ghana. Are you from Ghana?

Morgan Dixon:

400 years ago, brother. 400 years ago, for sure.

Dwayne Betts:

I love that answer. I was in France, and I got in the cab, but this cat said, "Where you from?"

And I was like, "PG County."

And he said, "Nah brother, where you from?"

And I was like, "Where I'm from?" I'm like, "PG County."

He was like, "Nah, I'm from Cameroon. Where you from?"

And it hurt my heart because I had no answer for him.

Vanessa Garrison:

PG County is not DC, let me just go ahead and put that in this conversation. Hello, PG County cousin. We are adjacent and much respect.

Dwayne Betts:

No. So this is the thing that people from DC tell me all the time, but let me just tell you this. You can walk from PG County to DC. In fact, sometimes your left foot could be in PG County and your right foot is in DC. But I like the notion of this idea of walking connecting me to the continent. So I wonder what leads you to Ghana.

Morgan Dixon:

Yeah, well, first of all, I am actually from Ghana 400 years ago. I did a lot of ancestry research and found that seven mothers ago, generations ago was a woman who came from, it was called the Gold Coast then because this was before colonization in the 1760s. And she came to Baltimore Harbor and she's buried there in Maryland now in Charles County. Her name was Ceethy Woodyard, Woodyard being the plantation she worked for. And so that name carried all the way to my great-grandmother, Caroline

Woodyard. And so we did come from the Gold Coast, but actually I think she was trafficked there because my DNA says that I'm from Bioko Island, which is off the coast of Cameroon. So she was trafficked there.

So how did I get to Ghana? I got to Ghana walking toward my healthiest most fulfilled life and taking good vacations around the world. So I got off that plane and I said, "Oh, this is what we doing. This is what we doing. This is what we doing." So I just went back to cold New Jersey and I was like, "Let me get me some luggage." I got four big Walmart suitcases. I rolled back with my little passport. I got me a really beautiful apartment with floor to ceiling windows and the sun shines on me every day and I've been walking in the streets of [inaudible 00:05:54] ever since.

Dwayne Betts:

But you got to understand that I'm walking in Philly right now and I worked here for a year and I was a law clerk, literally 100 feet from where I'm walking right now at work. And a lot of times it was desperate work. It was working for a judge on a Third Circuit Court of Appeals. But as a judge, you're supposed to be a unbiased observer. But what I observe frequently is how the hardships of incarceration frequently fell on women as victims, but also as the mothers and the aunts and the girlfriends of men who were incarcerated or who were incarcerated themselves. Now I'm walking right here now and I'm seeing these children playing outside and they are the semblance of the kind of joy that we forgot from what it means to just be outside and moving our bodies. And I wonder, this work seems to be closer to joy than what I usually get to contemplate. I wonder if that's true or if I'm just making that up because I'm not in the middle of it.

Morgan Dixon:

Well, let's just connect all of these lines. It's freezing out here where I am. Y'all know me [inaudible 00:07:04]. So it's hard to have to, I'm saying my body did not evolve for this Philadelphia winter. It is cold out here on this freeway. So bless those kids and I hope they have a coat on. And GirlTrek is absolutely about joy and justice. We are only walking because it brings us joy. But we walk together collectively en masse. Increasingly around the world we're in about nine countries now. We represent close to 10% of the total population of Black women in America. We are the largest health movement for Black women around wellness, around healing, around liberation, and we walk for justice. So that's where we center our strategy, but Black women are holding up the world. So yeah.

Dwayne Betts:

It's interesting, because the two of you guys met in college. I wonder actually, how did this begin? Because how do you begin this though? How do you decide that you're going to name something GirlTrek and you're going to center it around walking and believe that people will buy into the urgent need to do that?

Morgan Dixon:

I was going to say we wasn't starting no organization in college. We was just trying to live. We was trying to live and we was trying to organize ourselves to live. And I think we connected. Vanessa was a very cool girl in college. I was also, look, I wasn't no slum, you know what I'm saying? But I went to USC and she went to UCLA and we were just in LA at the perfect time, at the height of Tupac. You know what I mean? It was the moment you should be in LA when boys in the hill was coming out. It was good. It was a good time to be in LA. And we were in LA at that time and we were really trying to organize a radical solution

to how we stay alive and how we stay in our centers of joy and how we don't become overwhelmed by all of the systems designed to kill us.

And so we were working in said system of capitalism in the belly of an investment banking firm and we were like, "Dude, we're making more money now." Or I used to say this, "I'm making more money at 20 years old than either my parents had made in their lifetime and may likely make in their lifetime." And yet I was making a fraction of what the managing directors are making, a fraction of what they were making. And I realized that this wasn't a fair shake and that I could kill myself trying to compete in a world like this. And so Vanessa felt the same way. We connected and 10, 15 years later, Vanessa was it, we got in the social innovation space. We was innovating the way out of no way every day. But we got in this space and we got in pretty late. Which if there's any listeners here, know that there is definitely a bias toward youth and social change. And don't let that stop you. It's never too late to be brilliant. And so we was the old heads in all the fellowships.

Dwayne Betts:

It's so funny because now you making me feel like the arrogant Black dude, because I'm talking to these two young women and you talking about being in college in the '90s with Tupac. I was in high school in the '90s with Tupac. I went to prison the year Tupac got murdered.

Morgan Dixon:

Oh, man.

Dwayne Betts:

The thing that it makes me think about, one is my own arrogance, but two is what was the impact of that on you guys' relationship in life? Because I loved Tupac and I think he was the only person before I went to prison and even after talking about kids going to prison as juveniles. And I imagine you guys both recognize that there are really few people talking about women's health in the context of walking and Black women's health in the context of walking. So in a very real way, y'all are introducing a subset of a conversation that should be central that didn't exist before. And so I guess I just wonder what y'all think about Tupac and then what do you think about the legacy that you're creating in the shadow of where you grew up at, thinking about your own work in a world that didn't seem to appreciate you?

Vanessa Garrison:

Yeah. We are Tupac. We are the Tupacs of our generation and the Tupacs of speaking truth to power for Black women who do experience the hardships of incarceration, do experience the hardships of economic injustice, do experience the hardships of divestment in schools, do experience the hardships of being the caregivers of communities. And we came with a lived experience. So even when you were saying that you're arrogance, arrogance a little bit is necessary in this work. You have to have an understanding that you know better than anybody else what your community is experiencing. And because of that you have ideas and solutions. We told and reminded Black women that they come from a heritage and a lineage of Black women who have transformed the world, that they were walking in the footsteps of Black women who had made a way out of no way and made that way beautiful every day along the way.

And that message resonated with Black women, just like Tupac's message resonated to young boys who were getting incarcerated and young boys who didn't feel like they had anybody speaking to them. And we are the keep your head up, keep your head up, ooh child, things are going to get easier.

Dwayne Betts:

Things are going to get easier.

Vanessa Garrison:

And that just reminding us, things are going to get easier. And for the Black women in our community, the million Black women who are walking with GirlTrek, things have gotten easier for them because they're walking, they're sourcing joy, they're building community. And I think that they would say, yeah, that their life has gotten so much better from this movement.

Dwayne Betts:

I got to tell you, sometimes we do work and we think the work happens in front of a computer, but I'm watching these people now as I walk. Homeboy got his hand on the woman that he's walking with on the small of her back and they laughing, he pulling her close and she's smiling. A family of nine that's walking down the street and they're skipping. It's this kind of joy that exists in walking that reminds you that the work that you do is not simply living. And what I appreciate from this notion of walking mattering is that it makes joy matter as a part of the context of the conversation. I wonder how have folks responded on the street because you can't walk and be silent. When you walk you want to have conversations and you want to have conversations that make you feel needed and heard. And so I guess I wonder what have you guys heard about what this has done for people's lives? Independent of the health benefits, what about the community building benefits?

Morgan Dixon:

Yeah, we're revitalizing communities all across America. In fact, we have what we call GirlTrek Crews in the thousand Blackest neighborhoods across America. We were intentional. We unfurled a map, we put on pins. We organized state and regional coaches to come in and support and to set up tables. We knew where we needed to be and we knew which communities needed us to be there. We know that when Black women walk, things change all through time, from Harriet Tubman to the bus boycotters in Montgomery. And so now when Black women are walking in neighborhoods like Gary, Indiana or neighborhoods all along the American south, that things are changing. And what that looks like is, well, there's all this research around the relationship between citizens outside and the reduction in crime, the reduction in police abuse, the reduction in all sorts of things that are detrimental to livelihood.

But it's more than that. We become the heartbeat, the breath, the neighborhood watching sneakers, the hey auntie, the I see you out of my window and I'm a little girl and I want to do that too. The joy, the tutus. Our women, we stylish. So we twist them blue shirts. So we wear superhero blue, this bright blue because we feel like the superheroes we've been waiting for. We don't have to ask permission to save our own lives. And so you have these big crews of women who are going out there just living their best lives. So it feels nice. People honk at us, we wave at our neighbors. We have core values that say we always wave at our neighbors, greet them good morning. It is just like an army for good, an army for love, an army for joy out in these streets. So that's what it feels like.

Dwayne Betts:

It's wild because I won a fellowship and it came with a fair amount of money and I'm walking in the neighborhood with my dog because that's the person that introduced me to walking or the animal. So somebody was like, "Yo, yo, how's it going? Are you Dwayne Betts?" And I'm on the phone with my homie and he was like, "Where you at?"

And I was like, "I'm in my neighborhood."

He was like, "Why people just talking to you?"

And I'm like, "Because when you walk and you wave, you become a part of a community." And these folks, I don't see them as a threat and they don't see me as a threat. But I should just say, man, I'm writing this piece about this kid. It's a bit of a tragic story because he got murdered. But the point that I want to bring it up with this is that he loved the outside and he walked and I'm writing this piece about him engaging with the outside and it's echoing so much of the stuff that you're saying because by walking, he became a part of the community that he lived in. And it's this notion that if more people do that, more of us will feel a part of the community. I've never felt this way though.

Morgan Dixon:

Yeah. Well we looked at what's killing Black women. We did empirical research for years, year over year research and all these focus groups. And we came up with something called the four Is. And the four Is are inactivity. We know sitting is deadly. So you got to walk every day. We know injustice is killing Black women. Everything from poverty to environmental justice, injustice. We know that invisibility, that's the third I is killing Black women. No one's talking about the health crisis. It's not even at the top of mind of most policymakers. But the fourth I is isolation. And loneliness is deadlier than cigarette smoking. And so part of what walking does is it allows you to see and be seen by other humans. We are sitting in this weird, substandard divided suburban housing scheme that kicked us out of our neighborhoods, which became valuable after white flight came back. And so we are in these weird communities where we're isolated.

And so getting out of your house and walking past the same people watering their garden, you start to make more networks and connections and community that we have lost. And plus listen, people be checking for us on the streets. When you're in your neighborhood and you see a whole bunch of women in blue, you know it's GirlTrek. Honk at us, wave at us, they be checking for us. I'm saying. We also reuniting families. Listen, that's all I'm saying. Because you talk about that man. You talk about that man with his hand on the small of her back. I'm saying we making that happen all over America. That's what [inaudible 00:18:28].

Dwayne Betts:

But I'm really inspired by y'all. One, because I feel like I walked a mile while talking to y'all and I don't walk without my dog. So I feel like this is actually just for me and not for my obligation to this animal that I brought into our house. And also I should say as a Black man, the cool shit about it is I'm like, yo, I can't wait to tell my wife about this. I can't wait to tell my mom about this, because I know my wife, she walks with the dog like me, but my mom is a walking kind of person. So I wonder how do we make sure other people are hip to this? Because this seems to be one of these cool things that happen from vibrant, deeply intellectual Black women that's trying to change not just the politics that we live in, but our health outcomes. So I wonder how can we bring this to those folks?

Vanessa Garrison:

Well first of all, Dwayne, let me tell you something. You walk with the dog and your wife walks with the dog. But when you and your wife start walking together, brother, when you and your wife start walking together, I'm talking about love is going to compound. Problems are going to decrease. Understanding is going to expand.

Dwayne Betts:

We going to have more babies though, because that's what we after.

Vanessa Garrison:

romance is going to increase, yes. Because when you improve your physical health, then it improves your ability to have babies. So I'm going to just go ahead and say yes, all of those things are going to happen. We are uniting families who are walking together and we are asking black women in particular to be the leaders of this health revolution. We are asking Black women like your wife to, one, find their way by investing in their own self first and creating this daily habit of walking so that they can feel freedom in their body, so that they can feel freedom in their minds. And then once those Black women start walking and they can connect with us at girltrek.org, we have a beautiful community depending on what city they're in, or they can connect with us on Facebook. We have an amazing podcast called Black History Bootcamp. It's a 21 day bootcamp where you can get out every day for 21 days and learn stories of Black history while you walk.

So we want Black women to find their own rhythm and then we want them to come back and bring their whole families along, start walking with their partners, their spouses, start walking with their children, start walking with their neighbors, and start to create these crews where you can walk and talk and solve problems together. But we ask women first to pour into themselves, to not even try to be the leader of others until they could be the leader of themselves.

Morgan Dixon:

Listen, what's going to happen? The only one you miss is start walking with their mother. And if your mama and your wife walk together-

Vanessa Garrison:

That's right.

Morgan Dixon:

Listen, that is bond. That's bond. That's what I'm saying. That's bond.

Dwayne Betts:

Now, I don't know because you scaring me because the thing is both of those women is trying to get my life together and I've been resisting. They telling me to keep a calendar, to develop a budget. If I get them women walking together, I might have no more independent choices though.

Morgan Dixon:

But you going to be straight. You going to be straight. That's all you need to know, you're going to be straight. You're not going to get Marcus Garvey up in here. That's all I going to say. You going to have a budget.

Dwayne Betts:

So you know you just fucked everything up for the podcast. Because they going to be like, "What is Marcus Garvey?" And then people going to be going to the internet and they be like, "Oh man, is Dwayne soliciting? Is he soliciting donations via the mail?"

Morgan Dixon:

That's hilarious. But your mom's going to get you, right? This is really an intergenerational movement. It's the one thing we can do together. And if you think about it, there's not that many places where, A,

we can even meet our elders outside of church. And God bless the Black church, I love the Black church, but outside of that where you can meet elders and you can meet young people. I was just with one of our college ambassadors and that woman, she's 19, she's so vibrant. She just gives me so much energy. And then our elders walk with us all the time as well. So it really is a beautiful movement.

Dwayne Betts:

What I find fascinating about this is that there are very few ways for us to connect with our elders. And what you're doing is making walking not a fucking suburban phenomenon. You know what I mean? Because when you live in poor communities, I walk because I can't afford a car, I walk because I ain't got a bus pass,

Morgan Dixon:

Right.

Dwayne Betts:

And I like the way that you're legitimizing a natural way of moving from one place to another in the city where you live and in quiet as cap, I know more of my community from walking than I ever knew before. I notice the trees changing colors. I notice my neighbors.

Morgan Dixon:

Look at your, you better preach.

Dwayne Betts:

Yo, I'm about to be in GirlTrek.

Morgan Dixon:

Come on. You're welcome. All are welcome. Yeah, all are welcome. And it is legitimate that it's stigmatized because our communities are not that walkable. I read a statistic that if you live in a wealthy walkable neighborhood, your life expectancy is 10.1 years longer. 10.1 years longer. We have a new mission to increase the life expectancy of Black women by 10 years in 10 years. If we just made our communities more walkable, it seems like it would do it. You understand what I mean? So people have to get on the bus to go to the grocery store. They have to get on the bus to go to gainful employment. And what we want to do in the world we see in GirlTrek as a critical mass of Black women in America is we see a world where our communities are walkable. Where it ain't all hot on the sidewalk because we planted trees, where our neighbors don't have to work a 40 minute commute away, but we have Black businesses thriving because we've recycled the Black dollar.

Because on our walk we are not going to Starbucks, God bless Starbucks, Vanessa in Seattle, but that we're going to the coffee shop down the street. So we have a big plan and I invite everybody to join us and to be complicit in this wellness revolution. If there's anything you have that can contribute to Black women getting, well, whatever your business is, we're at girltrek.org. You can reach out to us and we can put you in this revolution because we need all hands on deck. We need all foot soldiers in line for moving in a better, healthier direction.

Dwayne Betts:

I got to tell you, I've been walking through Philly and I'm seeing parts of it that I've never seen before.



Vanessa Garrison:

That's right.

Dwayne Betts:

Because I thought I was successful and I was working for a judge. But in that job that I loved, it was nothing that told me that I should be walking this city that I was making my home for a year. And during this conversation, people have looked at me like, "Yo, you live here?" They might have looked at me because I got a microphone with me. But I think part of it was like, I've never seen a Black person in this area. So I do think that this notion of walking does so much for making us notice what needs to change in the community, but for making us notice what's there in the community.

I ask everybody though, because I heard the origin story, how you guys met, because I'm a poet, we talked a little bit about Tupac, about music, but I wonder if there's any books that influence this, how you approach this work. And I wonder if you two are going to write something, because I feel like you might have already written something, but if you haven't, I need to see that New York Times op-ed about the power of walking.

Vanessa Garrison:

Can I tell you something, Dwayne? First of all, this is not even about GirlTrek. I got your book, *Felon* poems last year. And it reminded me so much of Amiri Baraka that I was thinking you are just doing beautiful work. So I just want to say that. We didn't say that as part of this conversation, but your words are so powerful and you're doing beautiful work. So I just want to say that and when you just talked about your poetry, it just reminded me that you have such beautiful words to talk to people who have experienced incarceration, who are there and feel like we have forgotten about them. And you just bring so much color and so much life to what they are experiencing. So I just want to thank you for that.

Dwayne Betts:

No, thank you.

Vanessa Garrison:

Morgan, you can answer the question.

Morgan Dixon:

Yeah, well we had an op-ed written about us in the New York Times by a man named David Bornstein. He spent weeks with our organizers and it's beautiful. I recommend people read that. We also had the opportunity to give a really beautiful TED Talk about how trauma is killing Black women and particularly racial trauma is killing Black women. And we have plans in the near future to write books. I think the most prolific content we have is wherever you get your podcasts, listen to Black History Bootcamp, as Vanessa said. We have beautiful conversations as we're walking together like this one. And then we talk about the blueprint for liberation by really going back to how we have liberated ourselves in the past from an asset frame. We talk about different people and different places in Black history and it's powerful, y'all. People call in at the end.

We did an episode on hip hop, on Cedric Avenue, the birthplace of hip hop. And then we were like, "Correct the record, family. Correct the record, street journalists, everybody out there." Because people listen live. We're like, "Everybody out there, if you got something to add, call in." When I tell you it was a

actual house party on the line. People was like, "I was there at Cynthia's party whenever back in 1992." They was like, "My mama used to babysit DJ Kool Herc." It was so vibrant.

So if you want that community while you're walking and you don't want to feel alone, join our community, be a part of our crew. Thank you for saying that and thank you for the compliments. And Vanessa, that was so moving and so beautiful, rest in peace of Amiri Baraka. And we need the next generation of leaders like that. So I'm so proud.

Dwayne Betts:

As poets, man, we got to write about y'all because I think the powerful thing that Baraka did and so many other poets was they animated the world that they were living in. You say somebody like Robert Hayden and all of these folks he was writing about in often it's about women in the community. We need some poems about y'all, because I do think that part of how we tell the story for the next generation is through song. And so I'm going to make sure... Yo, I got a poem for y'all. 2023, that's what we opened up the new year with. It's going to be a poem and it's an Ode to Walking. I'm going to write it for y'all. We going to make it happen. It might not be good, but it's going to be written with love.

Morgan Dixon:

It's already good. It's already good. You know how Celie on The Color Purple is, "Everything you've done to me already done to you." Well, I say that to you, the poem already good. It's already done. It's already done. Yes. So thank you so much for that. That's so powerful because you think about the Black arts movement, and when Malcolm X was out in the street or Dr. King was out in the street, you had people like Sonya Sanchez who were narrating and who were translating and who were shifting hearts and minds and by talking about and writing poetry about what they were doing. So I really appreciate that.

Dwayne Betts:

When I went into this conversation, I glimpsed the bios, and I was like, "Oh, shit, I'm talking to my cousins. I don't even need to prepare for this." And all you both done is confirm that I feel like I'm talking to my cousins that might be slightly older than me.

Morgan Dixon:

Why you got to say that?

Dwayne Betts:

So when we out in the world, yo, those are my late cousins. I'm dealt with, because the thing is, the truth is, a dude me always wants to be like I'm older than everybody else and I'm trying to hang with the older folks, but I ain't going to front. Y'all got me on experience, y'all got me on age. I might be a little bit older than you by years because in prison you age like a dog. But y'all got me on experience and I've learned a lot in this conversation. And more than that, honestly, I have walked during this whole conversation and I feel not only healthier for it, but I've discovered something about what can happen. I've actually discovered something about what does happen when me and my wife are walking the dog together and talking. We going to make the dog stay home next time.

Vanessa Garrison:

Oh, yay.

Morgan Dixon:

Yes, yes. A walking date. A walking date. You heard it here.

Vanessa Garrison:

A walking date.

Dwayne Betts:

Yes.

Morgan Dixon:

You heard it here. I wanted to just say one maybe final thing. In addition to writing poems and uniting artists around this movement, we need you to do that. We need you to do that. I also really want to connect with you to think about how do we better serve women who are incarcerated and formally incarcerated? Because our research tells us that if you are incarcerated by age 40, your life expectancy is going to drop by four to five years, just by virtue of you having been incarcerated. So that is our mission. Our mission is to increase the life expectancy of Black women. That means that is a barrier to health, prison, which means we are abolitionists. So I'm just saying, how do we amplify the work of powerful prison reform movements and how does a million Black women stand behind as a caring army behind some of those efforts? So if you know people who are doing good work, particularly for Black women in prison, please connect us, brother. Please connect us. We would like to support their work.

Dwayne Betts:

I will. And on some very fundamental level, we never understood the value of walking while we were in prison. I got homies now that my relationship with them is just based on walking the yard. And this is back 1998. I never appreciated that as teenagers when we were walking the yard together, just lapping the yard, what we were doing was building a relationship by taking that time to do that thing.

Morgan Dixon:

Beautiful.

Dwayne Betts:

And I do think what happens is, man, so for 2023, what we are going to do is we're going to bring this notion to women's prisons all across the country.

Morgan Dixon:

Let's do it.

Vanessa Garrison:

That's right. Yeah. Let's do it.

Dwayne Betts:

Two days ago, my team was in a women's prison in Louisiana. We going to make sure that they know that you know what, we building in a library inside the prison, the Freedom Library as a part of my

organization. But part of that is to use the books in the library to spark the conversations that you'll have when you walk the yard.

Morgan Dixon:

Yes.

Vanessa Garrison:

That's right.

Morgan Dixon:

Walking book clubs.

Vanessa Garrison:

That's right.

Morgan Dixon:

Walking book clubs. I'm into it. Let's do it.

Dwayne Betts:

That's a bet.

Morgan Dixon:

Let's do it.

Dwayne Betts:

All right. Cool. Well, you guys get a safe flight to where both of you are going. I'm going to camp out here in Philly for the rest of the day. This has been amazing. I've walked around the streets of Philly. They like, "Yo, this brother really believes in walking." Some folks have seen me twice. They're like, "You still walking?"

I'm like, "I'm doing it."

Morgan Dixon:

Listen, it's been such a delight. Yeah. It's so wonderful talking to you.

Vanessa Garrison:

Oh, Dwayne, it was great talking to you. And I can't wait to stay in touch and do work together.

Dwayne Betts:

All right, cool. Y'all take it easy. Thank you.

Almost There is produced by Jesse Baker and Eric Newsom at Magnificent Noise for Emerson Collective. Our production staff includes Eleanor Kagan, Brianna Garrett, and Paul Schneider, along with Patrick Darcy, Alex Simon and Amy Low from Emerson Collective. Special thanks to Nia Elliot. I'm Reginald Dwayne Betts. Thank you for listening.

