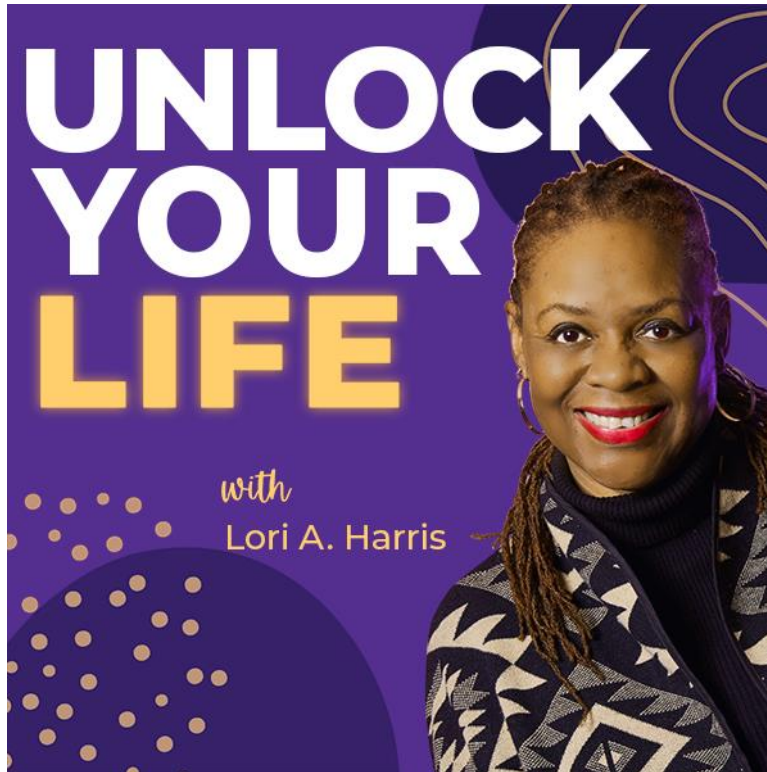


Ep #37: The Gift of Imagination



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Lori A. Harris

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It's the third week of March. We continue to celebrate Women's History Month. This week we're going to talk about the gift of imagination. If you hear the description of Black American women, that we die 10 years earlier than the average white or Asian woman. Or if you hear that Black women are more likely to die of lifestyle related diseases such as heart attacks, stroke, or diabetes, things related to obesity. Do you feel overwhelmed? Do you feel like there's no hope? Does it cause you to worry?

Well, equipped with imagination, we can take ourselves into a space of worry. But fortunately for us, two young women 11 years ago decided they wanted to do something about it. They started an organization called Girltrek. I'm going to tell you all about them. Let's get going.

Welcome to the *Unlock Your Life* podcast, a podcast for highly successful visionary women who want more out of life. If you feel that ache of unfulfillment in your soul, you're in the right place sis. Join life mastery consultant Lori A. Harris as she teaches you how to stop living for others and finally put yourself first. Let's dive into today's show.

So it was a little over 10 years ago and two college friends looked around, and they saw what was happening within their own family, and it saddened them. Their aunts, cousins, the women that they loved were dying early, dying young, and dying from diseases that they didn't have to die from. These two young women were saddened by what they thought, and they decided to do something about it.

I'm talking to you about Morgan Dixon and Vanessa Garrison. These two young women were in their early 30s and looking around and saying, "It's not okay. I'd love to do something about this health crisis that we see happening within our community." They did just that.

Can you imagine saying to yourself and to others we aspire to inspire one million Black women to take a pledge to commit to walking 30 minutes a day for five days a week. With that simple pledge and follow through with

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action, they aspire to change the trajectory of the health crisis happening within our community.

What I love about Vanessa and Morgan is that they're coming from a place of love. They never talk about attacking this issue from a place of blame or shame. They love Black women. They want to see us win. They want to see us shine. So they share with us what they know.

That the decision to take a walk can be healing. The decision to take a walk can be restorative. The decision to take a walk will change not only your relationship with our bodies, but it can free our minds. Free our minds to discover what we really want, discover places within our lives that we might be experiencing unhappiness, discover a new way to release sadness and perhaps depression.

Vanessa and Morgan talk about these health conditions within the Black women's community from a place of love and understanding. They understand that we have experienced a myriad of traumas and difficulties within our relationships, in our workplace, and in our homes. They understand that we are women who have suffered and are hurting. So when we experience these shortenings of our lives, it's not from something that we should be blamed for, but we should be cared for and embraced. Morgan and Vanessa do just that.

They do something which they call the Tubman Doctrine. They take their inspiration from that great leader and underground railroad pioneer, Harriet Tubman. What they say to us is first, save yourself. Just as Harriet Tubman first took off in an effort to save her own life, to gain freedom for herself. First, she went alone, and she walked those hundred miles herself. Then next, she came back. She came back for her family and friends.

Then after that, then she came back and gathered even more. More people who are willing to take the step, who were willing to take the risk. She met them halfway with returning now knowing the way and invited them to step into a bigger image of themselves as free people.

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She said, "Let me show you the way. I have found the way. Let me show you the way." She took several trips, rescuing and leading hundreds of people to freedom. From slavery to freedom. What Harriet understood first is that it started with a desire and a decision to be free.

So Morgan and Vanessa have taken it upon themselves to use their imagination and decide that while I could decide to worry, that would be an abuse of my imagination. Rather than worry, I'm going to use my imagination to think about what can I do. I am not just one person. We are not just two people, but we are part of a community. We can do something about this health crisis that we see.

So Morgan and Vanessa encourage us to first save ourselves, and to learn the history of our matrilineal line. So when one takes a pledge to be a Girltreker, we start with identifying the women who went before us. So let me tell you. I am Lori, daughter of Betty, daughter of Charity, daughter of Henrietta, daughter of Marguerite born in 1838.

The final element of the Tubman Doctrine is joy. Make sure that you live and discover joy, bring joy into your life. In order to express your life fully and truly save your life, it's more than just having physical health. It's more than just eating nutritious meals. It is a decision to live from joy.

So the gift of our imagination is first to understand that our thoughts have a tremendous impact on the quality of life we will enjoy. Morgan and Vanessa joined together their imagination and formed an idea that they could do something to improve the health outcomes for the Black community starting with the women. In 10 years' time, they successfully recruited over one million women to take the pledge to save their own lives. Never ask permission to save your own life.

Now that mission has gone global. They have taken their mission to help Black women reclaim their lives all over the diaspora and on the African continent. Just imagine what we can do when we have restored life to ourselves.

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So let's remember the Tubman Doctrine. First, save yourself. Once you have discovered the tools to save yourself and have more life, come back and get a sister. Then after that, come back and get more and share what you have learned. Then step into a place of joy.

Enjoy your life, just as Harriet Tubman did. A woman who was born into slavery, discovered freedom for herself, and then brought other people to freedom as well. Before the end of her life, she was a homeowner, a wife, and a mother. She helped hundreds and hundreds of people, not only on the Underground Railroad, but also in her new home in the north. That home has been preserved for all of us to learn from and to discover.

So what could you do with the gift of your imagination? Will you use your imagination to conjure images that bring you fear? Will you use your imagination to conjure images that produce worry? Or will use your imagination to be a startup, to be a founder, to be a founder within your own life. A founder of joy, a founder of freedom. What will you do with this one precious life? This is your opportunity. Each day is a brand new baby day.

Follow the leadership of Vanessa and Morgan, founders and creators of a beautiful organization known as Girltrek. You can learn more about Girltrek and take the pledge at girltrek.org. They also have a beautiful podcast called *Black History Boot Camp*, which you can take with you on your daily walks and learn something about the women and the people that have gone before us to make this world a better place. Learn more about the people that inspire these two wonderful, dynamic women.

This has been the *Unlock Your Life* podcast. I'm so grateful that you took the time to listen to the podcast this week. If you're enjoying the podcast, please share it with a friend. You can find it anywhere you listen to podcasts, and you can rate and review the show at Spotify and at Apple podcast.

Tell people what you like about the podcast. I'd love to hear. Anything you think I can do to make it even more valuable to people, I want to hear that

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too. Five star reviews are always welcome. I want to hear all about it. This has been the *Unlock Your Life* podcast. Remember, it's your life. Make it a great one.

Thanks for listening to this episode of the *Unlock Your Life* podcast. If you want more information on how you can transform your life and do it quickly, visit loriaharris.com. See it on the next episode of the *Unlock Your Life* podcast.