

# TGM S1 E2 Final

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Hello and welcome to the green mind podcast. I'm your host, Leandra Lacey. For those of you that did not already know me, I am a social conservationist. That means I work at the intersection of environmental and social sciences. I've been able to love and enjoy this space since 2007. And now I want to bring that space to you. I will be interviewing people around the world and understand the connection between human wellbeing and environmental outcomes. My hope is that you will find a way to engage in this space, we all have a role to play in the health of our communities and the planet. Let's see who's up next for today's interview.

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Hello, and welcome back to the green mind podcast today is going to be super exciting. I have two amazing individuals with me here today. I'll let them introduce themselves in just a moment. And I just want to say that whatever we're going to do as we go around and introduce ourselves, I will say do your pronouns please and as well as anything that you feel comfortable identifying yourself as, so I will start off so once again my name is Leander identify him are my pronouns and identify as black, Latin x and gay. So which of the two of you would like to start first

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out go this is Crystal eglee, co founder of inclusive journeys. My pronouns are she her identify as black and mixed, I am also cisgender hetero, and I'm coming from the ancestral territory of the Arapaho, Cheyenne and Sioux tribes, which today is known as Thornton, Colorado. Nice.

01:58

Thank you.

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Hello, my name is Parker McMillan. Bushman, my pronouns are she her hers identify as a black woman, and I am living in the same area as crystal.

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Fantastic. All right. So let's get into it and inclusive journeys. I'm so excited. So you know, one of the things when I think of inclusive journeys, I think, if anyone probably knows of it already, the first thing they probably think about is the digital Green Book. And which makes sense because of the explosive amount of popularity, which we'll get to in just a little bit. But tell me more. What exactly is inclusive journeys, because that's just a project. That's not all. That is inclusive journeys.

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That is correct. This is trustful here, inclusive journeys, one of our first projects that we're doing is a version of the digital Green Book, what I like to refer to it is a book TripAdvisor, so places where users can come in and submit locations and some data about that. It's not just like, you know, Was it good? Or was it bad, that's not as far as we go, we take it a bit further, we want to know how that customer experience was, based on your identity. A lot of other platforms kind of shy away from that. But we want to go all in. And we want to have these discussions on a business level on a space level, we want to make sure that people know that we are going to be holding businesses accountable. A lot of the reasons people have given us at the higher levels, policy levels for not making changes, or for going to going really slow that they don't have enough data to make the change, you know, how do we know it wasn't just this one person this one time, right? We know that you and I know that. Policymakers the highest levels that are capable of these decisions, business owners, they like to put blame for these things on on one person, one individuals, sometimes even the person who was harmed, sometimes just one staff member or person in the office or person at the cash register, right. But we know it's a systemic issue, to provide data driven, and then economic incentives for businesses and places to do better.

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That's so wonderful to hear. I know we'll talk a little bit more about it, I'm sure throughout this entire podcast, but you know, just to hear that people's stories really aren't believed until you have data behind it, which is so unfortunate, but that's, you know, how policies are made. So it makes sense that we need this data.

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Yeah, you know, I think that lots of people don't think about it as being a system. We're talking about systems change. And when people see issues that come up regarding race or identity or some form of persecution around your identity, They don't want to think about it as a systems issues, but there are individuals right within those systems that cause personal harm to folks. And then they are backed up by the system. And they are supported by that system. And so in order to create, we're trying to change the system, we're trying to change, change on a wider level so that there is not that infrastructure that backs up people's maybe personal bias. And once we can get rid of that system, then we can start to really make change also, on those individual levels, but you have to tackle both areas.

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Absolutely. That's fantastic. And on the back end, we also want to be able to provide businesses the opportunity to purchase demographic breakdowns of the reports people are submitting, we don't just want to say crystal uglies donut shop was a terrible experience as a black woman, we want to be able to show Crystal's donut shop that, you know, people have legitimate problems. And here's some solutions that you could present and you know what you can make more money off of it. If people's hearts aren't being changed right now, just by telling these stories and getting the word out there that this this is really harmful. You know, maybe we can reach their pocketbooks, maybe if they knew how much more money they could be making, if they took the Confederate flag down out of their lobby, they might actually be motivated by that. Whatever it takes, we want to be able to provide opportunities for businesses to do better, especially when some businesses might not even realize, right, they might think that just being a good person being trying to be kind and putting your best effort in is enough. You know, the people who say we don't see color, we treat everyone equally. Oftentimes, those are those are the people that incidentally, their unconscious biases are playing out the most. So we'd also want to just be aware that there are some people out there business owners, customer service on facing to the public may not even be aware. And so we want to provide resources to give them the opportunities to do better if they so choose. Absolutely. And

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so let's stick with the business side for just a second here. So what are the stories that you're hearing from folks around their interactions with businesses and why something like this would be so important for them? Yeah,

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it was really

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interesting when we first started publicly talking about this idea and what we wanted to do, the responses that we got some and from people that I maybe wasn't necessarily thinking of, I come from my own experience, as a black woman. And I know the experiences that I have had in public places and in stores, but we got messages like, Man, this would be amazing for the wedding industry. I'm in store, I work with predominantly gay and lesbian couples, and I'm never sure if this business is going to be the right one or not until after I've, you know, had to do that research. And it would be amazing to have this as a resource. And so, like this guide is going to speak to it not only we're speaking from our experience, but it's for everyone, because we know that people with disabilities, people from the LGBTQIA plus community, there's such a wide range of people that need to know where safe spaces are.

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Mm hmm. Absolutely. And what are some of the maybe potential changes that a business might make them and we talked about some things that seemed pretty obvious, like, you know, maybe take down that confederate flag if you feel like it, but maybe what are some ways to show that they are inclusive?

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Yeah, you know, I think it has a lot to do with the policies and the atmosphere that you set up with your staff, right, we see these individual incidents happening, right. Maybe someone called the police on someone because they didn't think they were a guest at the hotel or the bank clerk earlier this year, that called the police on a man who was trying to cash a settlement check. They thought it was a fraud. And the settlement check was actually as a black man cashing a settlement check for a workplace discrimination lawsuit, and then he went to the bank and got discriminated against. We think of it as these individual actions. But if we haven't set up the structure, as a business that look as a business, our employees need to go through unconscious bias training as a business our employees need to know What is acceptable and what is not acceptable and we're changing the system within our business that no longer will shield or allow for those interactions, those micro aggressions that people perpetrate on the daily, it also has to do with how are you presenting yourself as a business, we want to give businesses resources to show the importance of representation to show the importance of involving your community when in the creation of the work that you're doing. And I think a lot of those things will go a long way towards making sure everyone feels included and welcomed and celebrated and safe within these spaces.

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And the other thing, too, that's really important is to remember that the original Green Book, pointed out safe spaces, the whole contents of it was the more positive side of this, we absolutely feel there's a need to highlight any potential dangers, and make sure businesses know what they could be doing better. But first and foremost, we want to have people of marginalized identities, be able to plan safe travel, be able to plan celebratory travel, I was just telling my partner the other day, I can't remember a vacation I've ever went on where I felt 100% stoked and ready for it ready to relax? 100% You know, this all started when because I go hunting out in eastern Colorado. And it's not that I'm necessarily saying every rural town is seeded with tons of racism, but it's known, going out there and not knowing and being by myself, and not knowing anybody in any of these communities. Fortunately, I found a really great place out in eastern Colorado where I love to hunt, and everyone is nothing but hands down over the top, kind and welcoming so far. But it's the unknown that really personally freaks me out. And that anxiety, even if I have a great experience the entire time that anxiety carries with me, I would love to have a platform where I can go on and say you know what? best chances are, it looks like if I hit up these places that have been reviewed by people like me, best chances are two that I'm going to have a great time. And it will help alleviate some of that anxiety and stress ahead of time. So I can just look forward to my trip instead of having to plan it around, you know, potential

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dangers. And I really love what you brought up. And I want to dig into this a little bit further. So obviously, on the green mind podcast, we talk a lot about the intersection of people and nature. And so in this case, you know, you talked about your hunting trip, but what about these public spaces where individuals want to go to hang out that are environmental places that aren't like quite businesses? Maybe they're publicly owned, or but they still have bad experiences? Is that included in this whole process?

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Absolutely. That is the thing, it all centers around for Parker and I, we are both very deep into outdoor recreation, conservation, environmental education, Parker has degrees in it, have professional experience in it. And together, we are both extraordinarily passionate about it. But the original Green Book was centered around road trips during the time in Jim Crow, when black community was able to just start being able to afford cars and getting paid and able to afford leisure time and recreational activities away from their hometown home cities and home states. And so that's we always want to keep that in mind and in our hearts at the forefront of our efforts is the outdoor experience and the spirit of the original Green Book. That being said, if you go on a road trip for two weeks, you know, you're you're going to a grocery store, you go into restaurants, you might need a doctor, when you're out there, you might need any of the other facilities that

people use, but the whole original impetus behind the original Green Book, and therefore the soul and spirit of our work is the outdoors.

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And what do you see as now what are the differences now, between when the original green book came out?

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You know, I would like to feel like there is a huge difference. But I think that really these experiences have changed a little bit when the original Green Book I have have changed to say it stayed the same when the original green book came out. It was really centered around helping black motorists to identify the spaces that were not marked. So traveling in the south There would be signs that told you when you were in a sundown town, and signs that told you when you were not welcomed. But as people traveled in the north and traveled out west, those things were kind of underground, like you just had to know, the rain areas or risks, really, you know, seriously getting hurt or having bad interactions. And so like, even as I talk, I'm realizing that actually change that much right? from its original use, because, and the civil rights movement came and several laws were passed in the 60s that made people feel like that Green Book wasn't necessary anymore, and that we were moving into a new time. But I think that over the last many years, we have seen that, again, things are kind of underground, and that people are that are really not grappling with or understanding the unconscious bias that they might hold. It's sometimes even underground or unknown to the people themselves that are kind of causing people to have these bad experiences. Because oftentimes, you know, folks think I'm a good person, I care for all people. And so this doesn't apply to me. But they still have unconscious bias that makes them do things like call the police on someone coming to cash a check. They have a view of they couldn't legitimately have that money. And where does that view come from? You know what unconscious bias is tied to that view. So once again, we're in a situation where not only is it underground, where people are like, we know, we feel this way. But we're not, you know, going to advertise it. It is underground, where people haven't even grappled with the fact that they are perpetuating harm among marginalized communities. And this, I think, will be a wake up call, because now I go into a place and I have a bad experience. I don't have to risk myself, my labor trying to educate you, we now have a platform where I can put that data and you can see that it's not just me, but others have had those experiences. And now oh, you know, where I thought that I wasn't causing harm. And I thought that just loving all people was enough. I see that there's an issue that actually, I need to deal with, right. Hopefully, I got a little away from the Fernando. No, please. Yeah, I took

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it in it.

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And well, you know, in this interesting because it's not that we can protect all diverse bodies, even in the situations, I'm just bringing this up, because I think about the incident, for instance of Amy Cooper and Christian Cooper in Central Park, right. So Central Park might get the equal inclusive like symbol, like, okay, they're doing fine. But there's actually there's other people involved besides just the business or the entity. There's also customers, there's individuals. And so the situation that happened that occurred in Central Park, where we have this white woman calling the cops on this black man who was birdwatching in Central Park, because she felt threatened by him or you know, assumed because she didn't want to basically put her dog on a leash. Her way of retaliating on this is to say, I'm gonna call the cops on you, is that captured in what you're doing here in this project?

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So I would say like, we're starting with one part of the problem. There hasn't been this large kind of structural overview before, I think that even though we're starting with this small part of places, and maybe people that work for those places, that it will expand, right? And wouldn't it be great to get to the point where, you know, we're like, actually, if you're in this space, in this city, your 911 calls are going to result in or responses by police. If you're a person of color, and then having those organizations those government organizations start to look at themselves and say, Oh, you know, are there questions we can be asking things that we can be thinking about that would be different and how we respond different and how, who we send out In situations like this, because again, she was working on her personal bias, she sent out a call to a system that supported her personal bias, right. That's why she thought she could call the police on that, because she knew she was going to be backed up by a system. And the system is what we need to disrupt right what we need to dismantle, because people have to understand the system is no longer going to support my bias, and I'm no longer going to be able to feed in to a system that oppresses others.

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And one of the things about that specific example that strikes me a few Actually, it's like, a couple months ago, I was giving a presentation to national birding group. And I was talking about that the Central Park incident, right, and I'm talking about story of place, and how every place has a story. And it depends on who's telling the story. Who remembers the stories, you know, so for some people who heard that story, if they're white, that may not have the same impact on

whether or not they make a decision to go to that specific place in Central Park as it might for, you know, a black person who's trying to make a decision about whether or not to go to that specific spot in Central Park. I've had so many incidences of racism and threaten violence against me that some of my best friends were there, and they don't remember it happening. Wow. And it's something I think about every day. So those stories of place and stories about, you know, past violence and current violence are remembered differently. So if I went to a park, and I was walking around with my partner, who is white, and I happen to recognize the place where that happened, I would have a different like, kind of visceral anxiety reaction, my wife partner, and I'd be like, Yes, yeah. And that's true that that is just like part of the trauma we carry with us. And so you know, if we have a resource, I don't know if that plate, if that was just one person that one time or if, if White ladies are constantly calling the police on black people there all the time, right. And it be great if like somebody could tell, like, you know, that it's different for different identities, and we just want to make sure that everybody can have resources that helps them be able to identify those faces that are going to be safe, or that might potentially be of harm to them. Mm hmm.

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It's so interesting to think about this from the perspective of mental health, and physical safety. And a lot of this that mean, that's what's coming to mind for me, as I think through a lot of what we're talking about here. And, and a lot of it is when I think about, again, that example, there's other examples I've seen this year online, and, and of course, video is capturing everything. And so there's a situation where maybe individuals don't feel safe outdoors at all, just because they've seen some of these videos, and they need a resource, like what you're offering here, just to know that, hey, it doesn't mean I can let my guard down doesn't mean I'm 100% safe. But at least when I'm here, I can feel a little bit better. I can have some knowledge that people here are awesome. And they're accepting like, those are the kind of words I see on the reviews. So I don't expect to see automatically negative things. I'm to walk into a situation and be afraid. And that's a very powerful thing just for people's mental health that you're providing to folks. And I think that's a wonderful thing by itself.

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We're just trying to provide the things we would want our so nice.

24:02

So you know, let's talk about for a second, I said in the very beginning of the podcast, if they heard about inclusive journeys, they probably heard about the digital Green Book. And that is because you two blue, up now, no one in your friendship group, which includes me was surprised if anyone when we heard that Parker and crystal were getting together for a project. It was like this,



like massive gasp of like disbelief and shock and excitement of like, well, the two most powerful women that I know are about to get together on an endeavor. I don't know what this is going to be. But I know it's going to be a magazine. And so that when y'all really started to come out, I mean, you couldn't turn around without y'all on the news. Y'all are on another podcast. Y'all are another situation. I went on your website recently. And I'm like, oh, press release. Is that because y'all were just so busy, like, Hey, here's the press release. I don't want to talk to y'all. We talked to too many people. Here's our press release. Is that what that was all about?

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Actually, that was a result of our Friends and ally network coming out of the woodwork for us. There's no way we could have done all of this on our own, we had a white ally, who writes press releases, Public Relations Officer for an organization write that for us for free. That person actually even paid a fee to put it on a different use wire networks and unusual routes, also sent it out to their own connections we've had so many people from all different places in life, just come pouring out to support us. And we could not not have gotten this car without the help of friends and family. And it's honestly been very, very humbling to have this level of support. And it is yeah. Yeah,

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that's awesome.

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Also, I'm not sure if you're talking about our automatic email responder. We sat down one night, and we're like, Okay, what are information that we can give people that are reaching out to us, because we do have a lot of folks that reach out to us via email, and we, you know, are like I'm working a full time job. And crystal is also doing inclusive journeys, but working a consulting job to keep food on the table. And we have once you are out there, like we have put ourselves out there, you have a lot of people who want to help a lot of people who want, though also to kind of get a piece of you. And that can be exhausting, right? It's kind of like, yeah, if you're a person of color, especially in a majority white friends group, imagine the feeling you had this summer, right, right at the time of the George Floyd killing and the riots when every white person who wanted to like reach out, confirm that you were in good standing with them, also reach out and show you their concern, did that and it was overwhelming. And so we are so appreciative of the response that we've gotten and hope that people continue to reach out but also had to do some bit of triage going to try and stay on top of things, especially because we're at a point where we have to be paid for our labor. Yes. And that was something that we put in because we had a lot of people who wanted us to come and give like talks or keynotes or things like that, but didn't have weren't

necessarily thinking of the funding behind it. Or that we would need that in order to do this work and continue supporting our families.

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And it takes a lot of time to just respond to them and try to explain all. So we have a distinct broken down by category auto reply. emails, which was right, we wrote a chat to make it funny every now and then. But yeah, it's one of those things where it's just like, so great. And but it just takes so much time. And so we've had to like Parker use the word triage. Yeah, we've had to triage our communication to an app. And yeah,

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and it's really powerful to see the level of support and the amount of exposure that you've received over this time. And I'm gonna take just one quick pause though, because Parky's has something that triggered me and I didn't realize it was gonna trigger me. But yeah, I realized, you know, I think about this past summer, I think I'm not the only person that might have been triggers. That's why I want to stop and let it if and if anyone needs to digest this for a second. This past summer was difficult for a lot of folks and individuals. And I remember the amount of people who had to call me and ask me questions about, you know, George Lloyd, and are You doing okay, and how are you feeling? And, you know, I do realize that that that actually is a very triggering moment, this summer on top of George Floyd being murdered. There's also the other trigger of like, wow, this summer was intense. If you're a person of color, just because of your white friends. I mean, I shut it down. I said, no white friends for six months. Don't talk to me. Like I couldn't deal with it. And so but you know, it is difficult because you care about these individuals, and you want them in your lives, but at the same time, wow, that overload of desire to have credibility, and to be assured that they're in good standing with you is overwhelming. So again, I understand that feeling as wanting to stop for any listener who might be feeling that moment right now.

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Yeah, but it was hard because there was that, that want to reassure but also, that I think kind of comes from my own programming that we are programmed. to want to protect and reassure and seek to white comfort, even when you are not feeling well yourself. And also because you don't want anyone who is like reaching out to then say, Well, I don't even know why I do this because, you know, I'm getting this pushback, also dealing with white fragility. And it's difficult. I am so uncomfortable, even right now saying those words because of Oh, how might someone hearing this perceive that? What do they think that I'm saying about them, in particular, as a white person, because it is taken so personally, right? Almost say, not all white people write in as a Asterix to

everything you say. But it's a lot to have to see to white comfort, when also dealing with your own visceral reactions, fighting for your own life and ability to just thrive and survive within our society.

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And for me, up until this summer, I had never turned down a conversation with a white friend, peer or co worker about. And like I said, until this summer, one of the things is like, you know, everyone thinks that again, going back to the systemic approach, it's like everyone thinks that it's an individual, like, I'm one person talking to one person trying to check in. And if it was true, if it was one person or two people, or even five people who checked in on me, that would have been fine. But to me, the problem was that they didn't realize that like, literally every white person I'd ever met

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the same thing out of the Woodworks out of the woodwork in my way back in high school for no reason.

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I have not talked to in 15 to 20 years, where like, would you let me know if I did anything racist towards you? And I was like, probably not. Like, no, to me, it was not necessarily the reaching out individually is inappropriate or anything, it was the fact that there was a lack of realization that they were just part of a pattern. And it was like a white reaction as like a whole group. And to me that lack of realization, and inability to see themselves as individuals as part of a pattern. Like they were just seeing themselves as like individuals, and I'm one individual. And it's like, No, these are like systemic issues. And you're part of a bigger picture. And this is happening to me five times today. My issue,

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I had the mother of a previous staff member that I worked with, like 10 years ago, reached out to me, because I was the only black only person of color, the only black person that they knew. And so it is a lot, a lot of

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hard to put effort into that.

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But I think what we're saying here, you know, kind of tying it back to your business into what we're talking about here is that this is all the things that a person of a marginalized community is dealing with, as they're about to plan a trip, like that's so sad, that they can't just plan a trip, they have to think about all these layers and all these issues that are coming up. And you know, who's going to be the next one, to give them that micro aggression that they haven't thought about yet? You know, unfortunately, that's the sad reality of what we're doing. So just as we wrap this up here, let's talk about the journey, which is the two of you and your individual journeys, kind of what led you to where you are right now and being a part of inclusive journeys. Also, what would life have been like for you, if inclusive journey was already in existence? As you were growing up? Wow. Look, you know, I'm gonna get those questions.

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You know, I think, right, right now, this work is so important to me as I think about the work that I do, on a broader level, just trying to really make the outdoor recreation environmental education industries inclusive and have those conversations and, you know, having been told again and again, or asked again and again in trainings like where is the data? How, what is the data driven cause for us to do this work, right for me. I feel like This is finally going to give businesses what they've been asking for the data to prove that there needs to be a change. And with customer service apps like Yelp and trip, advisor's businesses kind of live and die on that data, and they are very sensitive to it, and they respond to it, and they make change based around it. And that's what I want to see for equity and inclusion within all spaces, right, I wanted businesses to respond to that. If I had had this growing up, you know, or like, even today, there's just so many things that I would have been able to avoid, you know, situations where I just really felt scared, felt that I was at risk and did not enjoy trips that I otherwise, you know, wanted to enjoy. I think about the summer before last, me and my family were road tripping cross country, and we had to stop on a little side country road at a gas station to use the bathroom. And my husband got an awful chilly reception when going in with our daughter. But then we had people who came out of the facility to stand out in front with their arms crossed to stare at me in the van with my children, as I wait for my husband to return. didn't say a word that nod, didn't talk to one another stood with their arms crossed and just stared at me. And being in situations like that, where I'm like, What is going to happen? Are we going to get out of here safely? Why are they doing this? Like, I want to avoid those things. I want to go spaces where I know, I'm going to be safe and celebrated and welcomed and not just tolerated, or even my safety be in question.

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And that's so powerful, because it's not just as a black woman, it's as a mother. Yep.

37:09

Crystal.

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Yeah, I think I just am over, you know, having to explain my trauma over and over again to people, even if it's just a level of discomfort or a feeling, you know, I felt like someone was following me around the store. I know when people are following me around the store, I can test it, I just make random patterns, you know, and like, somehow I'm, every time I look up, I can make eye contact directly with someone, right? Like I know what's happening. I'm just over trying to explain it. Like, maybe it's because you know, you're from the city or like, maybe it's because they like your talk or you know, and people just try to explain it away. And I'm just I'm over that trying to convince people that this is it's not just me. It's so so many people for so many different identities, not just black. So I just really want that data and I am like the least analytical person. I'm so artsy I'm so you know, I think abstractly, I think it pictures and now it's finally been driven, you've driven this artistic girl, to just go out and be like, give me data. Let's make algorithms, let's make a report, you know, because we need to show people that if you're not going to listen to our stories, you're not going to listen to our hearts, and you're not gonna believe our trauma, maybe you will bring a book believe numbers. And if I had this growing up, I mean, I grew up in rural Vermont, and I had so many people, teachers, classmates, friends, just try to dismiss one thing after another, I have had some closest friends say like, You always make everything about race. And I remember at a very young age thing, it always is. It just it always is. And they just like could not get it right. And so that's just kind of like a different compounded over the course of my life where, you know, this racial gaslighting is not going to be allowed to go on anymore.

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That's right. And I know a lot of the listeners that we get here are, you know, of diverse identities, and there is no question in my mind that both of you are active allies. And I cannot wait to see how this also, I mean, it already is is meant to be inclusive. So it already is. So if you are a person of different faiths, of different sexual orientations, whatever the case may be, whatever you identify as and you want to make sure that you and your community your tribe is safe. Please make sure you go and look at inclusive journeys and find out how you can support to make sure that your community is safe. And I really appreciate the two of you for providing that resource for everyone. So where can they go to find out more about the two of you, your website, whatever you want to add in here as we wrap up,

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inclusive journeys.com is our main website. That's where you can find us on social media. We are most often on Instagram at inclusive guide. On Facebook. It is at inclusive journeys as well Facebook forward slash inclusive journey. And for me personally, I'm at Crystal eglee on Instagram, that's cry S t a l, e, g. Li. Rk.