

Book Club

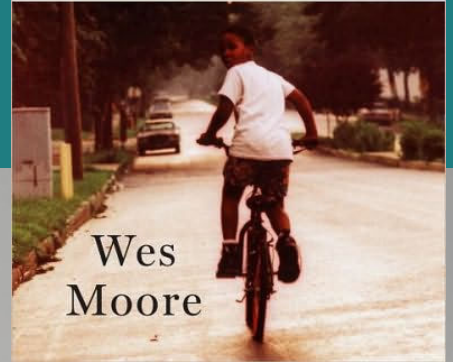
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

The Other Wes Moore

One Name, Two Fates

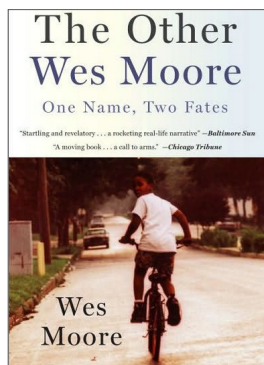
"Startling and revelatory . . . a rocketing real-life narrative" —*Baltimore Sun*

"A moving book . . . a call to arms." —*Chicago Tribune*



Virtual Book Club

All registrants received a free copy of the audiobook *The Other Wes Moore*. Join the online Forum Discussion by visiting the Event Hub (on the Conference website) and discuss its relevance to the theme of Equity & Inclusion.



About the Book

The chilling truth is that his story could have been mine. The tragedy is that my story could have been his.

Two kids named Wes Moore were born blocks apart within a year of each other. Both grew up fatherless in similar Baltimore neighborhoods and had difficult childhoods; both hung out on street corners with their crews; both ran into trouble with the police.

How, then, did one grow up to be a Rhodes Scholar, decorated veteran, White House Fellow, and business leader, while the other ended up a convicted murderer serving a life sentence?

Wes Moore, the author of this fascinating book, sets out to answer this profound question. In alternating narratives that take readers from heart-wrenching losses to moments of surprising redemption, *The Other Wes Moore* tells the story of a generation of boys trying to find their way in a hostile world.



About the Author

Wes Moore is the CEO of Robin Hood, one of the largest anti-poverty forces in the nation. He is a bestselling author, a combat veteran, and a social entrepreneur.

Wes' first book, "The Other Wes Moore," a perennial New York Times bestseller, captured the nation's attention on the fine line between success and failure in our communities and in ourselves. That story has been optioned by executive producer Oprah Winfrey and HBO to be made into a movie. He is also the author of the bestselling books "The Work," "Discovering Wes Moore," and "This Way Home."

Wes grew up in Baltimore and the Bronx, where he was raised by a single mom. Despite childhood challenges, he graduated Phi Theta Kappa from Valley Forge Military College in 1998 and Phi Beta Kappa from Johns Hopkins University in 2001. He earned an MLitt in International Relations from Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar in 2004. Wes then served as a captain and paratrooper with the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne, including a combat deployment to Afghanistan. He later served as a White House Fellow to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Wes was the founder and CEO at BridgeEdU, an innovative tech platform addressing the college completion and job placement crisis. He remains on the Board. Wes lives in Baltimore with his two children and his wife, Dawn.

Start Your Own Book Club

What is it?

A book club is a group of people who get together to read and talk about books. Since you received a free copy of the audio book *The Other Wes Moore*, you can start out discussing this book and issues related to equity and inclusion. Formal book clubs meet on a regular basis at a set location. Find a time and place for your book club where your staff can relax and share their thoughts about the book.

What can we do?

This guide includes discussion questions, links to videos, and activities you can use with your book club. Don't try to cover all these questions. Select two or three questions that will inspire your group to talk and think.

How can we give everyone a voice?

We selected an audio book so that everyone can get through the book in about the same amount of time. You can use the discussion activities below to make sure everyone has an opportunity to speak and listen to others. Be explicit that you would like everyone to listen and speak in the book club. You can use a talking stick (or talking ball) to pass around the group. Only the person with the talking stick can speak. This encourages everyone to consider and take their time before voicing their idea.

What comes next?

Most book clubs meet once every four or eight weeks in order to give members time to read (or listen to) the next book. If your team enjoys meeting and talking about *The Other Wes Moore*, you may decide to pick another book to read together. Your local librarian can help you select another book. You can use the discussion activities below with any book, and many books have discussion questions in the back for book clubs.

Discussion Questions

1. The author wrote, "The chilling truth is that his life could have been mine. The tragedy is that my story could have been his." What do you make of that statement? Do you think Moore is correct? What does this make you think about the work you do with young people?
2. Do you think having "positive" role models as a child serves as a deterrent to a life of crime? Is what constitutes a "positive" role model the same for everyone or does it vary? What are your expectations for a positive role model?
3. Oprah Winfrey has said that "when you hear this story, it's going to turn the way you think about free will and fate upside down." To what degree are we free to choose and create our own destiny? What factors determine our fate in life?
4. How does the role of family – especially the presence or absence of fathers in their lives – impact these two men? What about the role of their mothers, Joy and Mary? Grandparents? What about the families you work with?
5. Why do you think the author was haunted by the story of his namesake? What was the reason he insisted on meeting him in prison? Talk about the awkwardness of their first meeting and their gradual openness and sharing with one another.
6. Discuss the relationship between education and poverty. In your discussion, consider the education levels of both mothers, how far each man got in his education, the opportunities they gained or lost as a result of their education, and their reasons for continuing or discontinuing their studies. How can this shape what you do in your program?
7. The author Wes asked the prisoner Wes, "when did you first know you were a man?" Talk about the significance of that question... and how each man responded. How does society expect a "man" to act in your community?
8. Has this book left you with any ideas for changing the conditions that led to the imprisonment of Wesley Moore? What can be done to ensure a more productive life for the many young men who grow up on the streets? How can this shape what you do in your community?

Discussion Activities

Sometimes it is easier to talk when you are doing something else. These hands-on activities can make your Book Club more active and help build connections within your team.

Spinning Yarn

Spinning Yarns gives your team opportunities to listen to others and demonstrates their connectedness through play and discussion.

Requires

- A ball of yarn
- 10 or more people
- Use any of the discussion questions above or create your own
- Allow 8-10 minutes per question
- This activity can be played with everyone sitting at tables or standing.

Explain that each person should raise their hand when they want to speak and wait for the ball of yarn to be passed to them. Be gentle as you pass the yarn and try to be sure everyone is having fun. Start the game by holding the ball of yarn and posing a question, then wait for someone to raise their hand and pass the ball to them. Let that person speak, then ask if anyone else wants to respond. Remind the first person to hold onto the yarn and ask them to pass it to someone else who wants to speak. Continue inviting others to respond to the ongoing topic until the discussion seems to die out, then you can pose another question and continue passing the ball until you run out of yarn or run out of time.

End the game by asking everyone to carefully lay the yarn down on the floor or table in front of them. Reflect on the activity then begin to gather the yarn back into a ball starting with the last person that the ball was passed to.

Two Circles

Two Circles can help your team build community through one-on-one interaction with each other and help give everyone a voice.

Requires

- 8 or more people
- Use any of the discussion questions above or create your own
- Allow 8-10 minutes per question

Split the group in half. Half the group forms a circle in the center of the room facing out. The other half pairs up the people in the circle so that each person has a partner. Be sure partners are spread apart far enough so they can talk but still in a circle. Pose a question for everyone to discuss with their partner for four minutes, then allow three to five minutes to share ideas and discuss the question as a big group. Have the inside circle move counter-clockwise so everyone has a new partner. Repeat the process with another discussion question. Wrap up the activity with a reflection on the process of talking and sharing ideas in the circles.