

Questions and Answers from Carlie, contributor to [INVINCIBLE: The 10 Lies You Learn Growing Up with Domestic Violence, and the Truths to Set You Free](#)

What has having your story included in INVINCIBLE meant for you and/or allowed you to accomplish?

Sharing my story has helped me become free from a cage I never realized I was in. I thought all of the insecurity, shame, feelings of unworthiness, abandonment issues, and aloneness were normal. I thought that was just how life was. I was so ashamed of my past and it immensely affected everything else in my life. Sharing my story was the first step on the journey to healing. It opened my eyes to the fact that life could be so much better, that I wasn't alone. I had already started down the path of learning to love myself, but opening up about my story enabled me to jump start my growth and healing. Sharing my story in *INVINCIBLE* has allowed me to live freely, no longer bound by the LIES. It has also inspired friends and family to share theirs and to begin their healing process. There is so much strength and beauty in vulnerability and openness.

What did you learn about Childhood Domestic Violence (CDV) from reading INVINCIBLE that you didn't know/fully realize before?

The biggest thing I learned about CDV from reading *INVINCIBLE* was that I wasn't alone. I never knew that childhood domestic violence (CDV) was so widespread. I didn't know that it affected others the same way it did me. I learned that my situation wasn't something to be ashamed about and that it wasn't my fault. I also learned that I wasn't over it. I thought it was just something that happened when I was little and then it was over. I never realized that I was carrying around *guilt*, hurt, and *anger* that were seeping out in other areas of my life. CDVA and *INVINCIBLE* helped give me a name for what I was and what I went through. Once I was able to identify it, I could finally start my healing process. One aspect I found really fascinating was how the brain adapts and how that contributes to how I respond and react to stress and different situations. It is so interesting to hear the scientific data and research behind this. I love how the book includes the research and scientific data.

Does reading the book advance or shift your understanding of what you experienced in childhood and how it impacted you?

Reading the book did shift my understanding of my experience growing up with CDV and how it impacted, well, impacts, me. I had always viewed my childhood as something that happened and was done. I have always been grateful that I made it through and thought it was completely over. I shut off that one part of my life and never really talked about it. Since starting this journey, I realized it affected almost every area of my life. When your mind is run by the LIES, it affects your relationships, your confidence, your reactions, and your thoughts. This was great for me because things started to make sense. I finally realized why I reacted so intensely to certain situations and I was able to realize my triggers. This realization has helped me heal and helped me have healthier relationships.

Did reading the book give you a different perspective on the unlikely gifts earned from your childhood experience above and beyond the scars?

I've always known I was different. I just didn't realize that many of these gifts I have were chiseled by the environment in which I grew up. I never thought I would be grateful for what I went through as a child, but it really made me who I am. I am extremely compassionate, loving, and thoughtful. I am very resilient and adaptable. I think really quickly on my feet and work well under pressure. I also am not afraid to stand up for others or myself. All of these gifts were nurtured by the intense environment I grew up in.

In what ways has your interpretation of your childhood experience and what it means for you, your life, and your future changed after INVINCIBLE?

Reading my story in the book helped me learn so much about myself. When I first learned that I would be featured under the *alone* LIE, I was confused. Upon reading the story, however, I realized that was exactly who I was. Of all

the LIES, that *was* and *is* the most pervasive for me. I learned so much about myself through this process and have had an amazing journey of healing and self-love. *INVINCIBLE* helped open my eyes. Now that I know who I am and have a better self-concept, I feel even more unstoppable in life and in endeavors I undertake. What I used to view as a blemish on my record, or a mark against me, I now see as an asset.

In what ways have your everyday feelings, beliefs, thoughts and actions changed since reading INVINCIBLE?

I am a lot more compassionate and patient with myself. I still hold myself to high standards, but I understand that I am human and I am healing. I now realize that these “flaws” that I have aren’t flaws at all. Rather, they are strengths. They don’t make me a weak, bad, or incompetent person, but are simply a result of adversity I experienced. I now see myself as a conqueror in the situation. Learning to love myself and cultivate the TRUTHS has truly changed my life.

What chapter of the book was your story featured in and what other LIES have you struggled with besides the one addressed in the chapter where your story is featured?

My story was featured in the “ALONE to TRUSTING” chapter of *INVINCIBLE*. But in reading the book, I realized I’ve also struggled with many of the other LIES, including:

Worthless & Guilty: I have worked really hard to succeed at everything I do and I have done pretty well. Even with all my accomplishments, I never felt good enough. There was always this negativity in the background that made me feel like no matter what I did it would never be enough. I would never be enough. I thought that if I could be even better than I was that I could make situations better than they were. It was my fault.

Sad & Angry: Even though I would experience great things and enjoy life sometimes, I would have this overwhelming sadness and sometimes anger. I never knew why, but I now realize it was because I had never dealt with the trauma of my childhood. I had never allowed myself to feel those feelings and be okay with them. Those suppressed emotions came out in other ways, causing sadness or anger.

How did your childhood experience negatively affected you?

It made me feel alone. My parents were always fighting and when they weren’t fighting, they were working or gone. I went through the most pivotal points of my life without them. I never had a safe space. Violence could erupt at the drop of a dime, so I was always anxious at home. I was so ashamed of my home, my home life, and my parents. I excelled in school and got a great job, but I was still plagued by doubt. The internal and mental struggles with these doubts affected all of my relationships and how I carried myself. They affected my self-concept and how I believed in myself.

What was your turning point?

My turning point was when I discovered CDVA and realized that CDV was an actual thing. To be able to give a name to it and realize that I wasn’t alone was huge. To know that it was okay to have these thoughts and feelings, and to know that I could change it was truly liberating.

What was it like contributing your story to and seeing it come to life in INVINCIBLE?

It was difficult because I had to face my past. I had to not only face it, but work through it. All of those feelings I had suppressed and locked up had to come out and I had to deal with them. I didn’t realize it would be so tough. I didn’t realize the impact it had on my life. But it was also easy because once I knew I needed to heal, it became therapeutic. It was necessary. Sharing my story was so freeing.

What TRUTHS do you cultivate daily and how, to replace the LIES?

I cultivate the following TRUTHS daily:

Confident: I speak love and life into myself every single day. It’s hard to conquer the world when your self-concept is limiting or negative. I journal, do yoga, workout, eat right, and have fun. I work on being healthy in every aspect of my life and that health and feeling good help build and maintain confidence. I also surround myself with people who build me up and believe in me. Not yes men, but reciprocal relationships where the pouring into each other is mutual.

Free: I talk about my feelings when I have them. I no longer hide them and I don’t feel bad about having them. I own my emotions, responses, and my right to have them. Owning my power and being open has helped me be

free. I journal daily, I talk about my story, and I also see a therapist.

Passionate: Negative feelings and thoughts happen and you can't stop them from coming. What you CAN do, however, is choose the way you respond to them. Now, whenever I feel anger, or anxiousness, or frustration, I allow myself to feel it and then channel it into something positive. I journal, I work out, I practice yoga, I cook, pray, read, talk with friends. I am more prepared, because I have positive outlets for the negative emotions. I still allow myself to feel or have these thoughts, and I don't judge myself for it, but then I use that energy towards something positive.

Grateful: Every morning when I wake up, I think of ten things I'm grateful for. It's a great way to start your day with a mindset of gratitude and abundance. Any time I feel really upset or overwhelmed, I start thinking about everything in my life I am grateful for and it helps me put my situation in perspective instead of being consumed by negativity.

Compassionate: I love volunteering. I love giving back. I was blessed to make it through my situation and I want to be a blessing for someone else. I had The One, or a few people who were The Ones in my life, and without them, I don't think I would have made it. I strive to put that same positive energy of being The One into causes that are close to my heart.

Trusting: I give people a chance and try my best to not make assumptions. I journal every day and have learned to be open about my feelings and questions. If I feel someone hurt me or is taking advantage of me, I first talk to them about it. I also don't judge myself for having these feelings.

Loving: In my relationships, the most profound lesson I have learned is to listen and to not assume. Knowing all that I went through and how my loved ones have been patient and understanding, I try to cultivate this in all of my relationships.

Would you recommend INVINCIBLE to others who grew up living with domestic violence or anyone who cares about someone who did and why?

I would recommend *INVINCIBLE* to anyone who grew up living with domestic violence because it changed my life. It helped me on my journey to forgiveness, self-love, and realizing my full potential. It acts as a guide and comfort along the way. It may be hard to talk about or understand some things, and *INVINCIBLE* helps explain what you've always known and thought, but could never put into words.