

Questions and Answers from Jeanette, 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?

I needed to see my story have validity, for my words to be heard and that I could share and be safe. My hopes are that when my story is heard in full, I will also be able to guide others out of the past and into a life of loving and caring for themselves.

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

That there are triggers every day. I am not sure that we ever “get over it,” but I do think that we can stop, realize what energies were around the events of our past, and see if they are still valid at this time of our life. We can then re-write our story around the words or actions. We can also stop and no longer engage in actions/reactions that do not serve us.

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

It allowed for things that I have not spoken or thought about, to come up to the forefront so that I could realize the full impact and what I have left to do. The most important thing I realized is that everybody has a different story, but when I was reading other people's stories, there were pieces of each that I could relate to. I was able to realize through others' stories how many things truly impacted my life. What was most revealing was the part about keeping secrets – now that I'm older, I realize all the garbage and secrets I kept for so long. Like little minions, they haunted me, because we would sit around a table but no one wanted to be truthful and clear the air. So, we would talk about the weather or the meal, and no one would say what we were all really thinking, feeling. It feels so uncomfortable relating to each other when you're locked into that tirade and it just keeps going on and on. I also realize that there is still more of that stuff in me to shed. I put all of those things “behind me” but I didn't fully release them – I had to relook at all these things and learn how to make them go away – not give them the energy they demand – realize and accept that I don't have to carry them anymore. Had to come fully to terms with the fact that letting secrets go is ok...and stop dragging undercurrent feeling from the past into present situations. I need to be authentic with my feelings instead of feeling self-deprecating that I'm not feeling or behaving as others expect me to. I need to feel free to tell my story and my Truth without feeling others are judging me, because what they think of me really isn't material anyway – only what I think of me truly matters.

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

I never thought of myself as a survivor. I thought of myself as being a cast-away, I had a long list of negative words in my head that were put there. BUT I still had a deep understanding that I was a quiet, kind person that would help anyone, would care for anyone, and would touch anyone deep in their heart without barriers or labels. Over the past months, I've been putting my info together to write a brief book – part of that was about recognizing the past and going through it again, realizing I can't change it so I have to let it go completely, and "rewrite my story." I realized how many times in my interactions with my mother, through my kindness, I was the catalyst that gave her so many opportunities to change – that I was that for others and can continue to be that for others – even thought she in particular never did.

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

I've realized I can allow myself to feel a sense of ease, I can start to stop beating up on myself for all that has gone before. And the most important thing: That I did NOT cause it, I did not make it worse, and I could not fix it.

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

Triggers – how I deal with them has changed. What I've realized is that many times, people would use certain words that would set me off and push me over the edge – so often, I would react the exact same way as in the past. But now, I've become authentic to myself – I may not be able to choose my thoughts and feelings, but I CAN choose how to react, I have regained my power, I control the meaning and outcome of a trigger instead of letting it control me.

What other LIES have you struggled with besides the one in the chapter where your story is featured?

Some of the other LIES hit a chord, others reaffirmed how far I've come – in the past, I could relate to every single one of them, except maybe ANGER. I experienced them all growing up and later in life.

GUILTY – I was a guilt meter growing up in that home

RESENTFUL – I was RESENTFUL that I didn't have the life others did, couldn't have people over at my house, my mother would hang up on guys that called.

SAD – I felt sad, for everything I was going through

ALONE – I felt that I didn't fit in or that others didn't want me around and deliberately pushed me away.

UNLOVED – I spent a large chunk of my life seeking for others to care for me, to nurture me, to love me.

How did your childhood experience negatively affected you?

I looked forever for someone to nurture me, to hold me, to see me, to love me, to care for me, to hear me, when really, they never were committed or vested in that. My childhood presented experiences that made me need to test all situations in life to determine if they were TRUE or not – my benchmark for the TRUTH. I realized everybody wears masks and this was a difficult way to live, which left me perpetually unsatisfied, unfulfilled.

What was your turning point?

I realized I could not carry the pain and guilt of the past anymore. At this final third of my life, I could not fix them, I was not responsible for their actions, and I needed to cut the chords with them so I can see myself in the as I truly am. They no longer had the power to take my power, control me with their dogma, to hurt me with words and actions and to drain my heart of all the goodness I am. If they wish to hurt themselves and others, I am not in that game. It took just over fifteen years from the day my father was chocking me at the age of 45 in front of my kids and my mother sat there watching tv to come to this realization. But that day was a starting point that triggered the realization that violence is not bigger than me, that I'm bigger than it. And I was done with it. It set me on a different course.

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

It was difficult because my family of origin is still alive and deep in the process. To speak out, I truly had to have it as my own story and how I have experienced it rather than a dialogue on their life path. But it was also easy because I am learning more and more how to tell my own story and only mine, how it affected me and how it influenced those around me. I'm learning how to claim my story and set myself free.

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 – and I mean, anyone – because every life is of value. No one has the right to judge. No one can take away our inner spirit. We can change the story and we can take back our power. It is God-given and no one can take away.