

Questions and Answers from Nick, 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?

Having my story included in *INVINCIBLE* has meant a whole lot to me! Being part of something that can help someone have a revelation about the violent past they grew up with that helps them realize their full potential is exactly what I've always wanted. Too many children aren't given the knowledge that they are magnificent already and that the domestic violence they face is temporary. As cliché as it sounds, if I'm able to help just one person through my story, then my experience surely was not in vain.

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

Being that I was formidably educated on domestic violence and its effects before *INVINCIBLE*, I was mostly reminded of the many disturbing facts surrounding it. On the flip side, I was also reminded of the many positive changes that can be made in a person's life if the TRUTH is sought. It just takes seeing a glimmer of light to be shown the way towards a fully bright future.

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

INVINCIBLE has been a great tool to help me sort through the feelings I've had about my childhood. This book has reinforced my thoughts that I am good enough and powerful enough to do anything I want in life, regardless of my past. The compassion I feel towards other people and their situations also sometimes surprises me. *INVINCIBLE* showed me the reason I have this compassion is because of the violence I endured. To hear others' stories and how they came out on the other side has inspired me. No matter how successful I become, I always want to continue to be inspired.

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

Reading the other stories in the book brought me even more clarity that I am not alone in the suffering I endured as a child. That is a gift, because it helps me move away from the "victim" role. In the past, whenever I've allowed myself to sit in the "victim role," I have felt nothing but the negative emotions *INVINCIBLE* talks about – shame, anger, guilt, blame, etc... Even though I was a victim in every sense of the word as a helpless child in an abusive environment, I cannot continue to be that victim as an adult, because I really am no longer a victim.

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

Being a part of *INVINCIBLE* is another example of how my negative and abusive past has circled back to me in a positive way. Being able to share my story is not only cathartic for me but also gives me more evidence to support the TRUTH that I matter and my story means something. This type of knowledge will help propel anyone into a very passionate and bright future.

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

In the past, I have really struggled with 4 other LIES described in *INVINCIBLE*.

WORTHLESS: That deep inside, I'm worthless – literally worth less than others. Looking back at myself as a youngster, I definitely remember feeling like I was worth less than other people. A lot of it had to do with the fact that I was not very popular in school and I was picked on a lot. And what do you know – I read in *INVINCIBLE* that most children living with domestic violence tend to be the unpopular kids. My teachers disliked me because I couldn't respect any type of authority and my classmates didn't like me because I didn't know how to communicate with them properly. AND I was made fun of for "acting" gay. And how would I know how to respect authority when I didn't even respect my own parents?

FEARFUL: That deep down, I'm fearful. Although my abusive experiences made me fearless in many ways, it made me very fearful of rejection. I didn't realize that I was able to turn my fear into confidence until I started to work on myself in my late 20's. Approaching people for romance or even friendship used to scare the crap out of me. I couldn't do it and if I did, I had panic attacks before, during and after. My fear of rejection made me inauthentic and unable to speak in a clear and cohesive pattern. I can remember many times where I felt quite foolish because of the way I came across when trying to meet a new person or even worse, an entire group of new people at one time. Shoot me now. Then, the panic after, "Oh my God, did I look stupid, sound stupid, did they like me?" Learning the TRUTH – that I was not born fearful but conditioned that way – allowed me to say to myself, "Okay, what IF I AM confident and what if nobody will reject me? And furthermore, if someone does "reject," me maybe that doesn't mean there is something wrong with ME?!" Once I started to think that way, I took steps to act confident, and over the years, it has built up to the point that meeting new people is now exciting instead of nerve wrecking. What a gift!

SELF-CONSCIOUS: That I'm unattractive and flawed and everyone is judging me so. I have certainly struggled with this my entire life and, to some extent, still do. This goes right along with feeling worthless. On top of feeling like I was worth less than others, I also thought I was ugly, too skinny and flawed from head to toe. When I was a teenager, I had no idea these thoughts were unnatural. I also didn't know that once I was able to be my true self, I would find many people who, in fact, found me very attractive. I also found that I was able to do tangible things to boost my self-esteem. I started taking better care of myself and the biggest thing I did was start lifting weights. I didn't want to be that skinny kid anymore that couldn't stand up for himself. Once I started to gain muscle, I started to feel more attractive, not only because my looks change, but also because I did something for myself. When I saw my body change at age 18, I realized how much of an impact my own actions had on the outcome of my present existence.

UNLOVED: That I'm unlovable and unworthy of love, and don't even understand at times what love means. I didn't know I didn't realize what love means until I had already had 2 tried and failed abusive romantic relationships. I remember getting into absolutely horrific fights with my parents and/or sister

where we said and did things to each other that most people would NOT believe. I mean, the meanest and most violent things you can think of. Then, just a few hours later, we would “make up” and tell each other how much we loved each other. Literally, this happened all the time. I truly thought that it was okay for someone you loved to abuse you. That just because you call me nasty name or even punch me in the face doesn't mean you don't love me – especially if you TELL me you love me afterwards.

What was your turning point?

My turning point was when I realized I had a substance abuse problem. I had been using drugs and alcohol to escape my reality since I was 12 years old! I didn't think anything of it. I didn't have more than 30 days without a drink or a drug from ages 12 to 27. That's astounding to me now! Sometimes it was just a hit of marijuana or a couple of beers, and other times, it was more to the point of oblivion. The crazy thing is that I somehow managed to graduate college with a very high GPA and High University Honors, also having been on the Dean's List every single semester. I became a professional at the whole “work hard, play hard” way of life. Until it all collapsed. And once that happens, there is no going back to the good 'ol times. When I started living a clean and sober life, EVERYTHING changed and I started to become the person I was always meant to be.

What was it like to contribute your story to and see it come to life in INVINCIBLE?

It was difficult at first, because I was afraid of being judged. But it's been a couple years since I was asked to tell my story and I've gotten to the point where I have nothing to hide, because I have nothing to be ashamed of.

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

There are many ways a person can begin the process of enlightenment. Just as *INVINCIBLE* points out, some people are lucky enough to have The One in their lives, who says or does something to create a spark that gets someone to realize there is hope for a better life. Other people have an intuitive belief that there is more – something much better ahead. And some people are forced to look at the world through a new pair of glasses after an addiction to drugs or alcohol brings them to their knees. I consider myself lucky to have been brought to my knees by addiction. Imagine that! I feel LUCKY to have been in such a desperate place that I almost lost everything – from material possessions to my freedom and almost my very life. How can someone feel lucky for being an addict? When I got the chance to turn it around through a 12-step program, I got a lot more than just sobriety. I learned the TRUTHS that *INVINCIBLE* talks about. But what about people who aren't recovering alcoholics or drug addicts? Where are they going to learn the TRUTHS? Isn't the answer obvious? *INVINCIBLE*! I'm not just saying that because I'm a part of this book. I'm saying it because, as I read it, even the parts that had nothing to do with my actual story, I related over and over again. *INVINCIBLE* is a book that should be read by EVERY. SINGLE. ELEMENTARY-AGED STUDENT IN THE WORLD. Let's see if we can ease up just a little bit on Shakespeare and get a book in the school system that will actually transform lives in ways that will penetrate our society beyond anything anyone can even imagine. **It's time for a revolution and from the bottom of my heart, I believe *INVINCIBLE* has the ability to start it!**