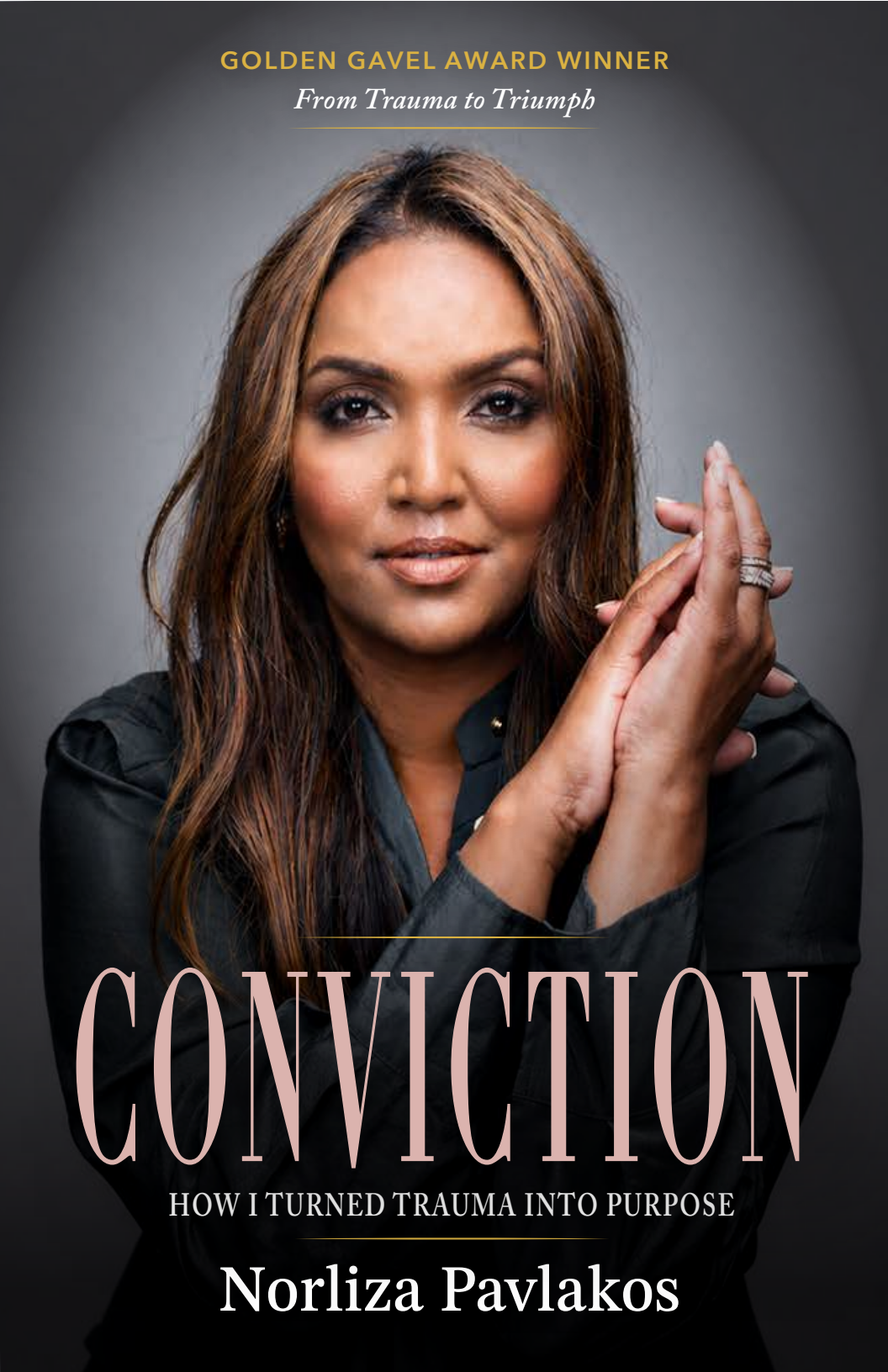


GOLDEN GAVEL AWARD WINNER

From Trauma to Triumph

A portrait of Norliza Pavlakos, a woman with long, wavy brown hair, wearing a dark blue button-down shirt. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile, her hands clasped together in front of her chest. She is wearing a ring on her left ring finger. The background is a solid dark grey.

CONVICTION

HOW I TURNED TRAUMA INTO PURPOSE

Norliza Pavlakos

PART ONE

Breaking Point

Don't plead for warmth from others.

Ignite it from the fire within.

Recognise Your Own Value

I was still a couple of years away from finding my motivational speaking feet when the inspiration for this book sparked a new light inside me. In my personal life, I'd risen above some soul-destroying adversities. Professionally, I'd built all the typical hallmarks of a 'successful' life as a businesswoman with a powerful income.

I was keen to write something for the benefit of other victims of trauma and abuse and explain how - despite circumstances that stretched back to childhood and created an unstable foundation of doubt, mistrust, fear and self-loathing - I was able to overcome my past and find my purpose. I imagined creating a book that would reveal how I turned my shambolic life around and evolved from zero self-esteem and zero self-confidence, to unwavering self-belief in my knowledge that I am capable of tackling whatever life throws at me.

My story didn't always have the prospect of a happy ending. Once upon what seems like a long, long time ago, I was a disempowered, voiceless victim of childhood sexual abuse, rape, abduction, a violent marriage and the self-medicating drug addiction that was my attempt to dull my emotional, psychological and

often, physical pain.

Today, as a motivational speaker, I draw on these personal experiences to prove that, when it comes to achieving goals, there is nothing that can stop you. I believe that success is possible, not because of unrealistic hope, but because of my commitment to seek the healing knowledge that helps me access powerful levels of determination and ambitious self-belief.

Creating strength from what had once been pain and humiliation, has not been easy. Believe me, though, when I tell you that it is possible. Writing this book has not been easy either. The objective behind sharing such intimate details of my life was not to hurt anyone and certainly not to cause embarrassment or discomfort for my loved ones.

By telling my own story of grit and resilience, I hope to shine a light on the idea that tapping into your own resilient spirit is achievable, even after spending a lifetime believing that spirit is crushed. This book is not written as a trauma-fest, where I share each difficult description of the many things that have happened across numerous years of my life in graphic detail. By choice, I have omitted many of the finer details of the trauma I have lived through, because that's not what this book needs to spell out. If you have experienced similar pain, I am sure you will appreciate that and understand. The lessons I want to share are bigger than explaining how many times I have been hurt or let down by someone I trusted.

My journey through a highly abusive, destructive, personal storm goes beyond survival to unlock the potential of empowerment and hope. I don't claim to have all the answers but the life skills I share in part three of the book, for regaining control in my own life, I believe they have the power to help you too.

Whether you're a small business owner, a team member, someone carrying the responsibility of a senior management position or immersing yourself in the life of a stay-at-home parent, all the skills I share have the potential to take you a step closer to a more rewarding outcome. When you break the negative thought patterns that wreak havoc in your mind, you can uncover the encouragement and motivation to access your own inner strength, find your voice and become the person you were meant to be, no matter how big the obstacles in your way might seem. The fact that I am still here to write this to you is irrefutable proof that, when fuelled by the right thoughts, our mind can truly be an enabling agent of change.

When selfish people cross our paths, those encounters can change the direction of our lives so horribly that the goals we were once so committed to seem beyond our grasp. Instead, we can feel as though we are teetering on the precipice of a deep, dark mine of despair. It only takes a small shove from another to push us in.

Once we start our descent, it's often hard to stop falling and, because the ability to climb out can feel so beyond reach, we sometimes choose to stay at the bottom. Worse still, we even end up believing that we belong there and so sabotage the opportunities that present ways for us to rise. Some of the selfish people

I encountered in my life were those I loved and trusted. How can an uncle say he loves his young niece, yet touch her in ways he knows is wrong? Why does family pride and reputation come before the wellbeing of a child? These incidents were the starter gun for a relay of events that threw me into that dark mine and kept me buried there for a very long time.

It took me a while to understand that, for me, sustainable healing was about accepting what had happened in my life and finding a way to move on. But the most significant part of my healing was realising that, even when I felt as if I was in the deepest, blackest pit of hopelessness, the prospect of mining the diamonds within my most painful experiences helped me keep going. I couldn't change what happened in my past, but I could take control of my future by making the choice to find the sparkling gems of learning I'd achieved amidst the chaos and steer my life in the direction that I wanted it to head.

That direction was upwards but climbing out of the mine wasn't enough. I sifted through all the heartache and pain deep inside me and took the diamonds with me. I could hold on tightly to the bright, shiny, valuable parts of me, wherever and whatever got in my way. I hope that my story will remind you that there are precious moments of knowledge, self-discovery and resilience within your own experience too. Hold on to them.

Trauma can be devastating and, depending on the cause, it can be so severe that overcoming it and regaining emotional balance may be virtually impossible without the added support structure of professional help and tailored therapy. If you're currently working with a trauma specialist or believe you need to reach out to one,

the story outlined in this book could inspire you to feel understood.

Just remember: the stronger your desire to heal and succeed, the more committed you'll be to retraining your mind and pursuing your goals. My wish for you is that, by the time you get to the last page of this book, you will want to take action to discover the untapped power within you. It's there. Trust me.

When you realise you are capable of achieving so much more, making the important commitment to never give up on your dreams is a positive step toward a better way to enjoy a more rewarding life. You've waited long enough.

END OF SAMPLE

Keep reading.

Conviction is available now as a book and
as an audiobook.

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NORLIZA

Conviction by Norliza Pavlakos