



## Indestructible: The Hidden Gifts of Trauma

**Krista Nerestant**

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*Encompassing an abusive childhood, the death of a parent, and personal success, Indestructible is a powerful memoir about resilience and forgiveness.*

Krista Nerestant's encouraging memoir, *Indestructible*, covers heartbreaking family struggles, the challenging experiences of settling down in a new country, and personal healing.

Born in the Philippines, Nerestant, her four siblings, and her mother were the constant victims of her father's brutality. The memoir opens with a heartrending scene from 1987, in which six-year-old Nerestant was forced to hold burning coals as a punishment for minor misbehavior. In 1989, her mother left for the US to escape her husband's cruelty. Years later, the children were reunited with their mother. Contrary to what they'd imagined, life in the US presented new, traumatic challenges.

Sibling rivalry is a dominant theme, including the painful consequences of parental favoritism. To avoid her father's callousness, Nerestant learned to look out for triggers that could set him off. In turn, her father treated her as his favorite child, resulting in strife between her and her siblings. The contention between Nerestant and her older brother, John, continued for years. The siblings lost their mother when Nerestant was fourteen; they were adopted by their overbearing aunt. Driven by the need to leave the toxic environment, Nerestant worked hard to become financially independent and take custody of her brothers. Though she faced unimaginable difficulties, she used her acquired strength to achieve her dream of becoming a business owner.

The book is divided into three sections, titled Cope, Survival Mode, and The Rise. These are broad representations of how each section tracks Nerestant's personal and career progressions. Among her personal stories, conversations between her and her energy therapist, Isabelle, are interposed to show how she was guided into overcoming the trauma from her past. These exchanges include illuminating insights, as of those around developing healthy perspectives about self-love.

Striking emotional metaphors and similes—of Nerestant facing her father's fury with her fear growing like wild, path-sandwiching gardens; of rage emerging like a roar—make the recorded events even more compelling. Forgiveness and exclusion both occur: Nerestant reunites with her mother, though feeling confused and distant from her, but also decides to cut her father from her life to protect herself. Still, a heartfelt and hopeful closing message shows Nerestant forgiving him, too—as a gift to herself.

Encompassing an abusive childhood, the death of a parent, and personal success, *Indestructible* is a powerful memoir about resilience and forgiveness.

EDITH WAIRIMU (August 20, 2020)

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