



Unfinished: A Personal Journey of Healing, Self-Discovery and Resilience

Isana

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Born into a rigid fear-based Christian family to a mother with undiagnosed post-partum depression, young “Frances” quickly learns her world is not a safe one. Strappings are common for Frances, who suffers multiple forms of abuse at the hands of those closest to her throughout her childhood and adolescence. To mask her fears and sensitivity, Frances develops a tough exterior and seeks means of distinction and success. Desperate for love, she goes on to college to find herself involved with a young man whom she marries, convinced they are in love. Later, in deeply different circumstances and a world away from where their relationship began, Frances confronts the fact that her marriage is not at all what it should be. Through counselling, Frances confronts the traumas that have caused her so many difficulties. As part of her renewal, she legally changes her name to “Isana” – meaning tenacious and strong-willed – and pursues meaning and justice in her career with unforeseen and devastating results.

Unfinished is a moving memoir that sees its gutsy protagonist triumph over remarkable odds to find herself and, ultimately, feel complete.

Unfinished: A Personal Journey of Healing, Self-Discovery and Resilience Details

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From Reader Review Unfinished: A Personal Journey of Healing, Self-Discovery and Resilience for online ebook

Wendy says

"Unfinished: A Personal Journey of Healing, Self-Discovery and Resilience" which I won through Goodreads Giveaways is an emotional journey through childhood abuse and adult trauma that begins with the pain, hurt and shame Frances Marie endures growing up. Wounded, desperate for love and acceptance when she enters college Frances finds freedom from her past, losing her inhibitions in drinking and sex only to become victimized by a young man who professes his love under unusual circumstances, and believing his lie they marry.

Plagued by an unhappy and sterile marriage and finally divorcing her husband Mike as well as breaking ties with her family, Frances finds solace in her love of running and her dog Boomer, but her lack of self-esteem, her insecurities and craving for love lead her on a path of further disappointments until she seeks counselling, bravely facing her demons and legally changing her name to Isana. Reborn as a strong, determined and independent woman she finds the love she's always yearned for but also grief, despair and the awakening of her old pain when faced with difficulties in a career she thought would be fulfilling. This is a story of a woman's anguish, heartache and brokenness; yet even with the odds against her she finds the love and a wholeness she wanted but never expected.

"Unfinished" is a poignant and honest exploration of an abused woman fighting to take control of her life, speaking her mind and finding the love and approval she's been denied since childhood. Faced with physical and sexual abuse as a child and denigration in her career Isana's story is inspirational as she struggles not only to overcome the emotional handicaps that keep her imprisoned but to find love, acceptance and completeness. In a simple, effortless writing style Isana takes the reader on a remarkable journey of "healing, and self-discovery" striking a cord in women like herself who have suffered similar experiences, feeling nothing but failure, defeat and hopelessness. Yet there is motivation and encouragement in the emotional roller-coaster of Isana's life that brings the promise of hope.

I enjoyed reading "Unfinished" and pray that in future Isana's life journey will be filled with lots of love, few troubles and much success.

E.A. Briginshaw says

I found the first part of the book quite engaging and immediately empathized with the author as she endured abuse from her family during her childhood. This led to numerous questionable decisions and dysfunctional relationships later on in life. At times, I grew less sympathetic as I felt the author's me-versus-them attitude created or enhanced some of her confrontations later on in life. The book is well written, although I felt some of the daily routine stuff could have been left out. After hearing the author speak, I was looking forward to reading about her self-discovery while walking the Camino, but this was a relatively small part near the end of the book.

Anthony Stancomb says

This is a book that feels as if it was written to get the author's troubles off her chest, but it's an interesting read, nonetheless. She takes you through her troubled life – a pretty loveless childhood, disastrous romantic attachments, religion and alcohol, and difficulty with work relationships – but she comes out on top in the end.

It's a fraught tale, and a well told one at that. Well written and with good pace and drama, even if slightly heavy on daily detail and introspection, each part of her life is filled with ample interest.

The author's troubles are interspersed by little sunshine. Apart from intervals when she is long distance running, sailing or being with her dogs, it's fairly grim reading, and what comes through from the narrative is that the author has always found it difficult to fit in. But this is what makes the book interesting, and in this way it much resembles *Olive Kitteridge* by Elizabeth Strout (one of the greatest books of the last decade, in my opinion).

Overall I found it a trifle heavy on introspection, and light on insight into those around her, but it's a remarkable tale of someone striving to triumph over their adversities – and you feel for the plight of the author every inch of the way.

Karen Trollope-Kumar says

Isana's book is honest and at times heart-wrenching, as she describes the struggles and challenges she faced as a child, in relationships and in the work world. She had some very supportive animal companions and wrote about them in such a loving way. I found this book too long and detailed, however. I think it would have been better if she'd tightened up the prose, eliminating many small incidents so that the more powerful episodes would stand out more clearly. But kudos to Isana for bravely sharing her struggles, and I think that other women who've experienced abuse will find this book helpful.

Amanda (Books, Life and Everything Nice) says

I received this book for free through Goodreads Giveaways. As always, an honest review.

I was excited to start reading *Unfinished: A Personal Journey of Healing, Self-Discovery and Resilience* by Isana, and it did not disappoint. This is the story of a woman who was told from childhood that she didn't matter. She learns to find her voice and go after what she wants in life. She's inspirational without being preachy. I appreciated her honesty throughout, telling her story through the good and bad times in life. Isana is an example of how negative childhood experiences can make life more difficult. She looked for a lot of external validation during her early adulthood. It then became a messy, tumultuous, and wonderful journey to being in charge of her own life. She is relatable, inspiring, and courageous. I think most people can relate to and appreciate her story, especially those with similar experiences to her. I appreciated the short concise chapters, especially since some contained some tough topics, abuse, to read about. It made it easy to read the memoir in short chunks and put it down when it became too intense for me. I should say, trigger warning for abuse of different types. I did find it a little frustrating at times, because I so badly wanted Isana to make the right choices all of the time. The ones that were best for her and would give her the love, happiness, and

respect that she deserved. Of course her life, like anyone else's, is a learning process. I wish that her early childhood wasn't so hard. That the adults expected to care for her did so, instead of setting her up for a life of unnecessary challenges. I liked that she was very honest and intelligently self reflective. Unfinished by Isana is such a special book. It's truly an honor and a privilege to read Isana's life story. I'm so grateful she was courageous and generous enough to share her beautiful honest words with the world.

Dominique Kyle says

A personal testimony of survival and healing. If you're a person who can't understand why you're hurting, messed up, making repeated mistakes in relationships, and getting dependent on some substance or other, when compared to others you know, you don't feel like you've any excuse for it – you weren't violently raped by your step-father, you didn't have petrol tipped over you and been set alight by your heroin addicted parents – you were just brought up in a fairly normal seeming family, two sober parents, going to church and such-like – then this might be the book for you.

Isana tells the story of her life, unpicking the small details of unrecognised abuse, that set up a cycle in herself of feeling worthless and vulnerable and unloved, and then how she spent a life-time working her way out of it, with the help of others along the way, and a recognition of the need to support, nurture and love her 'inner hurting child.'

Feeling stronger in herself, she goes to train as a police officer, only to find the extreme misogynistic attitudes and abusive behaviour from her male colleagues in the Force just serve to replicate the abuse from her childhood threatening to tip her over the edge of an emotional breakdown.

It's not a particularly 'scintillating' book. But it could well help you think carefully about any destructive patterns of behaviour you have, and why you can't seem to get a grip on them. And how you might be able to start to change.

In particular, maternal emotional abuse goes under the radar and is still a bit of a taboo subject. Other women, afraid of being judged themselves one day in the future by their own adult children, are quick to shut down any attempt to discuss it, usually dismissing the complainant with the words, 'I'm sure she was just doing her best – just doing what she thought was good for you.' But healing can only begin when the true source of the damage is recognised. (A bandage swiftly applied can't sort out a tumour that needs cutting out). The mature way may well be to forgive a sin that has been executed against oneself – but one can't forgive a 'righteousness'. All the time you believe what was done to you was justified and 'right', you can't 'forgive and let go' – it remains a thorn the flesh to cause a suppurating wound. Only once you recognise what was done to you was **WRONG** and that you were **SINNED AGAINST**, can you weep, feel the pain, heal and forgive. Attempting to control, dominate, manipulate or crush another person – whether physically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually is a sin against them. And a child is a precious gift to you, for you to nurture into the fullness of what they are meant to be, not a whipping boy for you to take out your own pain on. And as for the police force...all workplaces are a microcosm of the world. Unfortunately you don't escape the playground when you leave school. All those bullies are still out there, sitting next to you in the office. And unless you've dealt with your own trigger points, they're still going to be hitting all those same old buttons. And sad to say, the sort of professions that have real power over others attract two sorts of people – the ones who are there because they genuinely want to help others, and those who are attracted by the very real state-legitimised power and who have a need to feel important. Their own undealt-with issues leak out all over their colleagues and the general public that they are supposed to be 'serving'. It takes a lot of courage to stick to one's principles in these situations, and to continue to do right despite the peer pressure put on us to validate our work mates by joining in with the crowd and not showing them up by challenging the 'norm'. It takes a lot of courage to face one's own inner darkness and to emerge blinking into the light...

Scott Hensley says

Uplifting and life changing approach to everyday struggles.

Barbara Sala says

This is an excellent book to show the consequences of childhood abuse in our adult life. In this book the author concentrates on her struggle to understand her way to cope with relationships. She is strong. She wants to live. She doesn't want to be alone. She doesn't give up.

Abuse, whether sexual or psychological in childhood is a life sentence for an ongoing struggle. The writer also describes her love as a runner, her love for animals and the challenges of being a police officer.

I am getting angry when reading about her ignorant parents. While they think they do everything right, they destroy her. Parents should be encouraged to take a course to find out how to be loving parents and how to raise happy sons and daughters. And children should be introduced to psychology in school at an early age. I believe, then, there would be less abuse in families.

Towards the end Isana sends a letter to her dying mother. I especially like this non sentimental and honest letter.

Thank you Isana for Unfinished. You are a very strong person. It is quite unbelievable how fate kicked you around and you always kept positive and found new solutions: a pet, a new man, a challenging profession, expanding this profession to help people in your neighbourhood. You never lost confidence.

The book is easy to read and I give Isana happily 5 stars for sharing her life with us.

Robert G. Loden says

I have to declare that I won this book on goodreads. I basically quick read this book. It was enlightening. But not quite what I'm used to reading. I do give it a big thumbs up though. And as always I donate the books I win to either a library or a senior center. So it keeps giving.
