

Alice Perle's Q&A for Podcasts and Radio Shows

If you could ask Alice five (5) questions, which five would you like to ask?

Note that we have provided a brief response to each of the questions—sometimes, the answers will give you a different question or the next question to ask that has never been asked before.

1. Introduction to Your Story

Why are you sharing your story?

At 25, when I successfully disclosed my abuse, I knew I couldn't continue holding that secret inside—it went against my values. Staying silent felt unhealthy for me, my marriage, and as a role model to my daughter. One key part of my healing, and a theme in *Resolve*, is the power of sharing our stories. Survivors need to release the pain, talk it through, and know they are not alone.

Healing is a long journey, and it took me a long while to accept that. I was harmed as a little girl, and the emotional toll of keeping silent about sibling sexual abuse, compounded by societal and family shame, only added to the burden. Speaking up is necessary for healing, so I shared my story.

What inspired you to write *Resolve*?

Six years ago, I thought I would share my story from a stage. I tried doing that at a speaking workshop and cried more than I spoke. I was shaken and exhausted afterward. I hadn't yet dealt with the trauma.

So, in 2019, when I told friends I had decided to write a book, they asked what it was about. I'd feel nervous, my voice would wobble, and I'd quickly say, "It's about incest or sibling sexual abuse, my brother abused me when I was young, but it's alright—I'm just writing a book." I downplayed what happened to me, but inside, I'd feel shaken. The shame would start to swallow me up, I felt *less* than them. I wonder if I had said too much and if I would be judged. I realised I had been carrying that silence and guilt inside me for 50 years.

Resolve was my way to put that silence to good use. I knew I needed to speak up, to release the shame and share my truth. Writing allowed me to come to terms with my own pain, and over four years, I poured myself into this process of healing, growth, and writing.

What was the hardest part of your healing journey?

Healing isn't linear—it's layered and takes a long time. Writing *Resolve* uncovered so many layers that I didn't even know existed. I sometimes fell apart, but it was part of the healing process. Therapy became essential to me during this time, as did the support of my husband and daughters. They had my back, which gave me the strength to keep writing even when it felt unbearable. Writing *Resolve* felt like stepping into a tunnel of dark memories, but the further I went and the more times I walked through those tunnels to understand my past, the more I healed.

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2. Understanding Sibling Sexual Abuse (SSA)

Why are you passionate about raising awareness about SSA?

Sibling sexual abuse is a form of incest—one of the most hidden and misunderstood types of trauma. It's said to happen 3-5 times more frequently than adult-to-child abuse within a family, but it's often dismissed as "child's play" by parents or society in general and brushed aside. The victim is left feeling confused, guilty, and to blame, with adults too often turning a blind eye.

Through my journey, I pieced together the long-term effects of this abuse on my life, and I discovered that many survivors remain silent for decades, if they ever disclose at all. The statistics barely scratch the surface because so much remains unspoken. *Resolve* empowers others to break the silence, to start those difficult conversations that lead to healing.

What are the long-term impacts of SSA on survivors?

The impacts of SSA are profound because the abuse happens in the one place where we should feel safest—our home. For me, the abuse lasted from the time I turned eight until I was almost 12, and then my brother attempted to abuse me again when I was 14. The fear, shame, and confusion permeated my entire life, affecting my relationships, my ability to trust, and my sense of self-worth. Yet I didn't say a word for years. All of this turmoil, the guilt, shame and self-blame, were inside of me, telling myself stories that weren't true.

The coping mechanisms survivors adopt—numbing, self-harming, or even overachieving—often follow them into adulthood. I became a high achiever, driven by the need to prove myself, to win love and approval. What I didn't realise at the time was that so much of my behaviour was a result of the trauma I had experienced. Survivors often feel like they're just "being themselves," but many of these behaviours are connected to the abuse.

How can we prevent SSA in the future?

Prevention begins with breaking the silence. We need to normalise conversations about SSA, not shy away from them. Parents should be educated about the signs of sibling sexual abuse, and they need to know how to create safe spaces for their children to come forward.

One idea I have is to include a prompt during teen girls' first contraceptive appointment that asks if they've experienced any form of sexual trauma. This could open the door to earlier disclosures and interventions. If not, then, as adults we go to gynaecologists, are attended by midwives, or even go to dentists – all of these are triggering. All of these need to become trauma-informed and can, for example, add a question on their intake forms, that indicates there is need for extra care when providing services to a survivor of SSA.

We also need to recognise that healing is long-term and costly. Therapy often takes years, and many survivors cannot afford to stay in therapy for the duration they need. As a society, we need to make

Alice Perle's Q&A for Podcasts and Radio Shows

therapy more accessible and reduce the pressure on survivors to bear the burden of disclosure and healing alone.

Section 3: Writing *Resolve*: The Journey

1. What challenges did you face while writing the book?

The biggest challenge was confronting my own pain. Writing about sibling sexual abuse meant revisiting deeply painful memories, and at times, it felt overwhelming. I went through many drafts, and each one took me deeper into understanding my trauma and how it shaped my life. Another significant challenge was managing the legal aspects. When it comes to family and abuse, particularly in Australia, there are complex legal risks, so I had to protect my abuser's identity and family's privacy while still telling my story truthfully. That balance was delicate, but I'm proud of how it turned out.

2. Why did you choose a pseudonym?

Initially, I hadn't planned to write under a pseudonym, but I had always planned to submit the manuscript for legal review, which I did when the final draft was ready. It became clear that there was a risk of defamation, particularly given that it was sibling sexual abuse. Using my real name could have exposed my brother's identity, and me to legal action, and defamation wasn't the point of the book. My mission was always about helping survivors, not shaming or blaming my family. The pseudonym allowed me to tell my story while protecting the privacy of everyone involved, including my brother, without compromising my message.

There was much more to who may sue an author of such a book – I can talk about that as a separate, interesting exploration I was thankful I undertook with the professional guidance of my lawyers.

3. How did writing *Resolve* impact your healing process?

Writing was cathartic and transformative. I thought I was further along in my healing journey than I was, and writing brought up emotions I hadn't fully processed. It was a long, painful, but necessary process. As I wrote, I connected the dots between my past experiences and the ways I had been coping. I came to understand how much the abuse and trauma that followed it, due to our family dynamics, had shaped and hurt me, in ways I hadn't realised. The book allowed me to get curious, release some of that pain and come to terms with my past. It became a research project, which was a form of therapy in itself.

Section 4: The Power of Storytelling

4. How has sharing your story transformed you?

Sharing my story has been empowering in ways I didn't anticipate. It gave me a voice that I felt I had lost during those years of abuse and right up until I found healing alongside the writing. For the longest time, I felt alone, and that is a deep, long-held feeling that would arise within seconds and take me down 'through the floor' as I called it - depression and dark thoughts would swallow me up fast. A lot of what I found was trauma-related. I had always shamed myself over as being 'awkward

Alice Perle's Q&A for Podcasts and Radio Shows

me, bad me'. I had to see that me staying silent, keeping all of this in, I was not allowing anyone who cared and loved me to understand what I had gone through. But when I started sharing, I realised I wasn't alone. People began reaching out, saying that they had gone through something similar or that my story helped them understand someone they knew. Young women shared that now they feel seen and now they have an idea of what healing means. It gave me a sense of purpose, knowing that my vulnerability could help others heal too.

5. What can storytelling do for survivors and their allies?

Storytelling has the power to break down walls of silence and isolation. For survivors, sharing their stories can be a way to release pain and take ownership of their narrative. It allows them to see themselves as creators of their own lives. For allies, hearing these stories builds empathy and understanding. It opens up conversations that wouldn't happen otherwise and helps them support the survivors in their lives. Storytelling humanises trauma and bridges the gap between lived experiences and the support systems that survivors need.

6. What advice do you have for survivors trying to share their stories?

Start small and go at your own pace. Sharing such personal pain is incredibly brave, but it's also something you need to be ready for. You don't have to share your whole story all at once; you can start by writing it down for yourself or talking with someone you trust. The important thing is to permit yourself to be vulnerable. Find your voice in a way that feels right for you. And remember your story matters – not just for you, but for others who may be silently carrying the same burden. Every time you speak, you help break the silence for someone else. If you feel like you'd prefer to do it with support, the innovative indie publishing company that was formed to help me bring Resolve to release offers services you might be interested in – they're Blue Borage Publishing.

Section 5: Advocacy & Impact

7. What has been the most rewarding aspect of your advocacy work?

For me, the most rewarding aspect has been hearing from other survivors who say they felt seen and validated by my story. It's incredible to know that my voice is helping others find theirs. I've also had the opportunity to collaborate with other advocates and changemakers, and that sense of community is incredibly powerful. Together, we're breaking down the stigma around sibling sexual abuse and making space for these important conversations.

8. What challenges have you faced in your advocacy, and how have you navigated them?

The biggest challenge has been the stigma and lack of awareness around sibling sexual abuse. Many people don't even realise it's a thing, let alone how common it is. I've had to be patient, educate gently, and prepare for difficult conversations. Another challenge is the emotional toll advocacy can take. My healing journey has allowed me to shift into thriving, to the creator mindset. I do still have my bad days, or moments that come up because of whatever it is that comes up! However, I now find it difficult to drop into 'victimy' stories, the ones where people go around in circles of problems and drama. I hope that the empowerment work I found helped me and that I now deliver can support them to find their own creator mindset – because it is within them, it just takes conscious effort to lean into that, rather than the mindset of victimhood. Talking about trauma regularly can be exhausting, so I've had to learn to set boundaries and take care of myself. I've navigated these

Alice Perle's Q&A for Podcasts and Radio Shows

challenges by focusing on the bigger picture: every conversation, every podcast, and every blog post is a step toward breaking the silence and creating change.

Section 6: Personal Empowerment & Moving Beyond Trauma

9. How has The Empowerment Dynamic (TED*®) and the 3 Vital Questions (3VQ®) influenced your healing journey?

Learning about the TED*® framework and the 3VQ® approach of my mentor, David Emerald, has been life-changing for me. TED*® helped me shift from a victim mindset to a creator mindset. It allowed me to see my trauma not just as something that happened to me but as something I could learn from and grow through. TED*® and 3VQ® taught me how to respond to challenges with the understanding that I have choices, I can respond rather than slip back into the spin-cycle of reactivity. This shift was crucial in my healing journey and has deeply influenced my work with other survivors and advocates.

10. How do you help others step into their creative power?

I lead by example, showing that vulnerability is a strength, not a weakness. I create safe spaces for people to explore their stories and emotions in the programs I facilitate. Although I am not a psychologist or counsellor, I am a certified licenced facilitator and professional coach. One practical exercise I use is asking participants to recall moments when they acted from their creator essence — when they made choices aligned with their values and vision. It helps them realise that they have the power to make those choices again, even in the face of challenges. Empowerment is about remembering that our trauma does not define us, but by how we choose to move forward.

Section 7: Future Vision & Community Involvement

11. What is your vision for the future of your advocacy and writing?

I want to continue expanding the reach of *Resolve* and the Power of TED* programs. I see a future where survivor-authored books like mine become part of broader discussions in schools, workplaces, and communities. I hope that they will aid researchers deliver practical tools, frameworks, and programs that help others navigate what we survivor authors shared about with greater ease. I also want to create more opportunities for guided conversations on the books as a way for people to come together to talk about these difficult topics in a safe and supportive environment. Collaboration with other advocates is key to this vision — and the services of Blue Borage are being developed to support that - none of us can do this alone.

12. What upcoming projects are you excited about?

I'm working on several exciting initiatives, including expanding TED* programs into survivor communities and launching facilitated lived experience-led conversations around survivor-authored

Alice Perle's Q&A for Podcasts and Radio Shows

books. I'm also exploring more speaking opportunities, both locally and internationally, to continue raising awareness about sibling sexual abuse and the long-term impact of trauma. There's so much work to be done, but I'm excited to keep pushing forward, one baby step at a time, towards my vision and making a difference.

Section 8: Words of Wisdom

13. What advice do you have for those starting their healing journey?

First and foremost, be gentle with yourself. Healing is not linear, and it's not something that can be rushed. It takes time and patience, so don't pressure yourself to "get over it." Permit yourself to feel what you need to feel, and take things one step at a time. Reach out for support when ready — whether through therapy, support groups, or sharing your story with a trusted friend. And remember, you are not alone. There is a whole community of survivors and allies out there who are walking this path alongside you.

For more ideas of what could be covered in your podcast or radio show, and presuming you've already read or listened to *Resolve*, you could choose one section of *Resolve* as the subject to dive deeper into.

For example, there are plenty of issues in there that Alice encountered as she researched and then realised were affecting her, she just had never had the words to describe them—the realisation of abandonment, hearing her doctor say she had cPTSD, the latch-key kid era, intimacy impacted by SSA—and so much more!

Otherwise, check out Alice's weekly blog, which shares heartfelt messages Alice feels will benefit survivors or those who want to support them; it began with raw notes from her journalling activity that explored the who, what, how and why in planning her book. Sometimes, there will be blogs, including Alice's key takeaways from reading on the subject or from conferences or webinars she attends related to sibling sexual abuse. She's always interested in what the leaders in the field are doing to prevent, intervene or support adult survivors and their families.

Please feel free to use this as a guide and send Alice any questions from this list or your questions you'd like to explore, plus any other requirements, before lining up an introductory conversation to see that the podcast or radio show is a match and then take it from there.