



## Episode 102: OVERCOMING TRAUMA w/ Byrdy Lynn, Author

This is the Become an Unstoppable Woman podcast with Lindsay Preston Episode 102 Overcoming Trauma.

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Welcome to the Become An Unstoppable Woman podcast, the show for goal-getting, fear-facing women for kicking ass by creating change. I'm your host, Lindsay Preston. I'm a wife, mom of two, and a multi-certified life coach to women all over the world. I've lived through enough in life to know that easier doesn't always equate to better. We can't fear the fire, we must learn to become it. On this show, I'll teach you how to do just that. Join me as I challenge you to become even more of the strong, resilient, and powerful woman you were meant to be. Let's do this.

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Hi there, Ms. Unstoppable. Welcome to a very special episode of the show. On it, I am interviewing author Byrdy Lynn. She recently wrote a book called *Through the Storm of Early Trauma: Healing and Overcoming*. I read Byrdy's book from cover to cover in one sitting. I couldn't put it down. I've never done that before.

Now, granted, it's not a super long book, but her story is one that, my goodness, this woman has overcome a lot of trauma, and she only goes up until when she's graduating high school in this book. She's going to put out a second part of the book that details her life after high school. She was physically abused as a child, mentally abused as a child, sexually abused in high school. Oh my goodness. Just so many things she's had to overcome and Byrdy's my age. I think she's 37, so a year older than me. As I'm reading the book, I found out she actually grew up right across the metro from me.

I grew up about an hour away from her, and yet, our community experience was very different. She lived in a part where there was a lot of violence. She talks about that in her book too, and what she's had to witness. Byrdy is also a Black woman and she talks about in her book the racism she's had to experience, especially when she moved from Texas, where she lived in a primarily Black neighborhood, to Oregon, where she was one of the very few Black people in her entire school and community.

Byrdy's story really inspired me. I knew just even when I saw her energy, before I even read her book, that I wanted to bring her on the show and I'm very picky about who I bring on the show, y'all. That's why I don't have a ton of guests anymore. I have a lot of people that reach out to me and usually, I say no to almost everybody who reaches out



to me. I usually go and I handpick people for the show. Byrdy was one that I hand-picked because, again, I just think hearing her story, you are going to realize how much you can overcome.

We don't get into the details of her story in this interview, because I feel like you need to go get the book for that and pick it up and hear what she's overcome between her dad and her older sister abusing her and things in high school that happened to her. We do talk about, overall, how did you overcome this sort of trauma? What was it like to experience racism? We're going there.

What's so interesting is Byrdy is obviously not a client of mine, she's not familiar with any of my work. Especially at the end of this interview, she's like, "Well, Lindsay, what you do?" She doesn't know any of my stuff but what's so cool is that as she's telling her story, I'm tying it back to the things that I have taught you here on the podcast, especially if you're a client of mine, of like, "Okay, here I hear you saying you found your authenticity and this is where you went next with this," and she's done all the steps I've taught you, but she's done it in a way where she's found her own truth.

That's why I think a lot of the things I'm teaching you on the podcast is just the process of life really, the universal truths that we experience. It's so neat to me that she has gone through, in essence, some of this work in finding her authentic self and speaking her truth, and doing all that stuff. Byrdy gives a lot of great nuggets on this. Some of my favorite nuggets, I must admit, are near the end of the interview, where we talk about her being unapologetically Black. You can tell she really came alive talking about that, so sit back, listen. This is a very chill interview and we're just talking about overcoming trauma in it.

I hope it inspires you and allows you to see that if Byrdy can overcome some of this trauma in her life, then you can absolutely overcome your own trauma, too. Again, I highly, highly suggest you support this woman and go get her book. The link is in the show notes and you can find her book on Amazon, too. Again, it's called *Through the Storm of Early Trauma*. Here she is.

**Lindsay Preston:** All right, Byrdy. So excited to have you on the show. I told all the listeners a bit about you and how I read your book from cover to cover, and I couldn't put it down. And they know that you've experienced trauma in your life, obviously. So can you just kind of walk us through before we even get into how you process that and some of the details of your book, what it's like to just put a book out in the world like this, to share your story how has that felt?



**Byrdy Lynn:** What is it like to put a book out like this? It's very scary, nerve-racking. You know I processed and went through a lot of emotions, all the way through even to the very point where the day before the release I was like, "Can we just not? Can we push it back a little bit?" There was a lot of anxiety, even prior to the night before. And then I just had to let it go. Once it was out, it was like, okay, it's out and I hope that people are inspired.

**Lindsay Preston:** Yeah, I mean we talk often on my show about speaking your truth, and how that's not easy, and what comes up with that. And so when I read your book I'm like, "Man, this is a woman who is speaking her truth." So we all know how that feels. But it's good to hear that you were still feeling it, even on the day before the release.

**Byrdy Lynn:** Yeah. It's not easy.

**Lindsay Preston:** Yeah. How do you feel now that the books been out for a few weeks?

**Byrdy Lynn:** Actually, people have been reaching out to me, and it's made me feel 100% better to see the reviews on Amazon. People have emailed me. , They've pinged me on my social media. And it's really changed my life to know that because I was vulnerable and I wasn't surface level vulnerable, I was deeply rooted in my vulnerability to share a very cathartic moment process that was happening for me in my life, as I put this down on paper, it made me feel good and it made me feel good that I was able to inspire others, and also to hear of a lot of people who were like "hey we have similar stories."

**Lindsay Preston:** Yeah. Yeah. So with that said, Byrdy, how have you been able to process all of this trauma?

**Byrdy Lynn:** Yeah, it's taken some years since it hasn't been an easy process but it took years because I would relapse. So basically, "hey, man I'm hurting, I'm depressed. I'm struggling emotionally." And, and I would recognize it and I would acknowledge and accept that I needed help. But then when it came to try to understand the source and where it was coming from and to confront it, fear would stop that and I'd go back to "I don't have a problem." It's a it's a vicious cycle, for sure.

**Lindsay Preston:** Yeah, so what I hear is, every level is almost, I always say "new level new devil," you hit a new level and you're like, "Oh what's this. Yeah, I want to avoid it." But then you really have to deal with it right?

**Byrdy Lynn:** Yeah you try to, I know for me, I tried to compartmentalize it. And so I tried to just push it back, it's "hey things like this happen, keep moving, you're fine. Just



move forward. Don't be a baby about it." All these things I would tell myself instead of letting me feel those emotions, and really face them. I ran from them.

**Lindsay Preston:** Yeah, we have to feel our way through it, yeah. Okay, so the next thing I want to ask you is, you said in your book you were used to like turning it on outside of your house. You'd go out in the world and they knew you as a certain person and you were achieving pretty well for the most part. Especially like in your track career and stuff. But then nobody quite knew what you were dealing with at home. And so many of my clients and listeners can relate to that of like being one version of yourself and then being another one at home and people not knowing how to deal with those demons. So how have you processed this and how have you kind of integrated, you just being you now, and being authentically you?

**Byrdy Lynn:** I want to clarify. So, there's still a difference, I have my authentic self right, I am unapologetically authentic to who I am. It was funny when Beyonce came out this song Flaws and All. I was like, "Oh, that's me" because I have all these different sides of me that make me Byrdy. And so when I go to work and in my career and my profession, I am authentic to who I am. But I'm not as relaxed to where I would be at home. So I wanted to just clarify that because a lot of people take it to "yeah when you go to work, you're like this." No, you have to step it up a notch and when you get home you can actually relax and you can wear your curlers in your hair and eat bonbons and watch movies. But, I learned to kind of turn it on from a young age. My dad was a minister and so I had to always mind my manners. Sit properly, straight up, eat right, all these things, and I just wanted to just eat with my mouth full, talk with my mouth full and just be me. But of course I understand this is just normal etiquette, but then also just having to watch how I talk, I can't talk back. "Yes, ma'am. No, ma'am. Yes, sir. No, sir."

All of these things that your parents want to teach you as a child, but it was just like to the 10th power. It was just this pressure of always having to be perfect as a child and then going into adulthood and being a woman, it was the same types for the pressure, at least that I felt. For an employer to tell me, "leave your personal life at the door and come in and perform." For me, it actually was a source of escape because I was able to say "Okay, great. I can do that" because I'm used to doing it right? And so I'd go in and I'd just forget about my personal life and I just dove head in for my career life and achieved all these good things, but as soon as I'd leave and go home I'd have to face what I was avoiding. I can't work 24 hours a day. So yeah, it's that being authentic to who you are and pushing past that not being authentic but being on and really just putting up a facade of "everything's okay I'm smiling all the time," everyone likes you. But really you're hurting inside because your significant other just beat you. And you had to cover it up with makeup, and go into work. You know that's not really the life and I mention that because in part two I'll talk about that. It happened to me.



**Lindsay Preston:** What I hear again birdie is, you know, we grew up, so often it's like we don't feel we're just these good girls. We go and do these things and we are like little robots, and even when we get to the professional world again it's like, you know, same materials like leave your personal life at the door. But then we go home and it's like, oh yeah, here are these feelings again that I have to deal with, and you have to feel your way through that. That's why so many of us, especially that had childhoods like that, overwork. It's like, "I'll go escape my problems with working." It's so interesting Byrddy because you're not that familiar with my work but as you're talking through your story, everyone's like "yeah this is all the same thing we all have to go through." We go through it in different ways. So cool. Okay what are we gonna ask you, next. Are you ready for this one?

**Byrddy Lynn:** Yes. Ready.

**Lindsay Preston:** How did your family feel about your book?

**Byrddy Lynn:** I had conversations with all of them. That's still a work in progress. I think that there's some embarrassment. There's some "Why can't you just tell me this?" instead of putting it out for the world to see. All valid emotions. And I acknowledge them and respect them. But the truth of the matter is that there are some things that need to be dealt with. Especially with my dad I'm just gonna that out. I love my mom there was nothing there. Of course she's said that it had to come to that but I'm just praying on me and my dad's relationship. My oldest sister, we have a really great relationship. Again there's some embarrassment there. But we had moved forward a while back on this, but I shared to her that the importance of me just kind of healing and getting this out there so that others who went through the same thing that I went through could actually know that they weren't alone and to be helped. And she was all for it but of course there's that human side of it where she's very emotional about it, just because of the embarrassment and that those things happened.

**Lindsay Preston:** Yeah, I mean that's what makes your story so brave, is to put it out there I mean we all feel that putting out our story. But, I feel like yours is next level, because you put it in a book, and there were some things that you can't sugarcoat. It is what it is. So major props to you Byrddy. I have another random question, these are all the questions I had while I was reading it. One thing you mentioned in your book, this is one big system of doubt, is an essence that you knew what your experience was with your father, nobody could talk you out of your truth anymore, because remember when she moved out, you have that moment of, "Okay, this is messed up."

**Byrddy Lynn:** Yeah.



**Lindsay Preston:** So in essence you saw how you were being almost like gaslit, often, you know that term? And I think so many of us are experiencing forms of gaslighting in everyday life from the media to people in power and in our personal lives. So can you start to recognize now when you're being gas lit and talked out of your truth and then how does that feel to you and how do you overcome that?

**Byrdy Lynn:** Absolutely. And I notice it. Just in dating and relationships when it happens there. And with employers, when I was working for someone else I would notice it with certain managers. I think that now what I do is, for me, I'm being authentic to who I am. When I recognize the bigger picture of what's going on, I either have two choices. That I could either choose to see it, explore it and what's happening. Of course, if it's not harmful. If it was harmful to my myself or my child then of course no I would immediately call it out and speak on it but I think I literally just have a choice to whether I'll deal with it, or I'll call it out for what it is. And I can tell you I have very few friends. I have about what I can count on my hands of who I trust. And I don't keep a large circle just because a lot of people don't like that I could be just real blunt and call them out for what they're saying or doing.

**Lindsay Preston:** Yeah, again Byrdy like you know how to speak your truth. This is what you're starting to master so well and you've mastered is "I'm not putting up with that." And that's one of the blessings maybe of experiencing it is now you can see it for what it is.

**Byrdy Lynn:** Yes, Yeah.

**Lindsay Preston:** I want to highlight this because many times we don't think we're as powerful as we are, but there were a couple people you mentioned in your book that really made a difference in your life like Nikki and Dee. Can you just speak more about the impact and give words of encouragement to everyone listening about how they can be impactful.

**Byrdy Lynn:** When you say that, meaning about those people, or..?

**Lindsay Preston:** Because I know Nikki and Dee, they change so much of your sense of self It sounded like. Just speak a little bit about that because I feel like people need to read the book to really get the depth of it but just just giving words of encouragement to realize how big of a power they've played in your life and how we can all have that power.



**Byrdy Lynn:** The very first person was Takoya, and she was in middle school. I'm so thankful for the opportunity from above, for God to allow me to still be here, and for her to be there for me in that moment, right after I tried to commit suicide. The reason why is because if I was successful and committed suicide, then I never would have the opportunity to meet Takoya and understand that there was someone in my corner. There was someone who, although couldn't truly relate to all the things I was going through, could definitely still love me anyhow and be there for me. And Takoya showered me with love, acceptance validation, everything that I needed in that moment, and thereafter, to feel as though I existed, to feel as though I'm here for a reason.

And so, the love and the friendship that she showered on me really gave me life and helped me to understand a little bit more of who I was. And then when me and Tacoya went to separate high schools, well, now I'm at a high school all by myself and Nikki was there. And she was like an angel. She was there for me. She was like the most popular girl in school, but I had learned that my older sister had been there for her when she was getting bullied in her freshman sophomore year, she was kind of bullied a little bit, and my sister protected her. And so she kind of sought me out, and just took me under her wing and helped me with Student Council and just gave me that that life and the energy, once again all positive, to just push towards success. I love Takoya and Nikki for that. In the times that I needed them most that they were there. Rest in peace to Nikki she was murdered. The person that murdered her, he was on death row and he's not living. It was tragic because I received a letter from her with pictures and everything, and she was always still encouraging me. I didn't know that was the last letter that I would receive. And so it had bothered me for the rest of that year or two after until my senior year that I just thought maybe she's forgotten about me Maybe she's just too caught up in college life. And then when I learned what happened to her my senior year after I had ran back away to Texas, I was devastated.

But those two those two girls really helped me. If I could give anybody any advice, no matter how old you are having a mentor or opening up to a friend around you, even getting counseling, the school counselor is there for you if you don't have friends or people who are paying attention. Suicide is never the answer. And I just encourage people to be honest and truthful enough themselves to know they can't do it by themselves. I'm so thankful that I opened up to Takoya and to Nikki.

**Lindsay Preston:** I think what's so important about that is if I'm really looking at the story, Takoya she was just there at the right person, right time, had the right message. It's not like she went over the top with it but you needed it so much in that moment. Like you said it was like, "Oh, people can love me, there is hope" almost. And then Nikki gave you even more of that. And then later, Dee, like you love in a different way too



and it's so great you had those people in your life to show you a different way of love. And granted they may have known a little bit of what you were dealing with at home, but they didn't know the full of it. I think it's just so powerful that they were able to provide you something that they didn't even know you really needed. All of us need to just show up and be in a place to serve and and give because you never know who needs it.

**Byrdy Lynn:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Lindsay Preston:** Two more questions for you. So you talked about in your book about racism and how you experience racism. And you said you experience overt and covert racism. Can you define like, how would you define the two for you.

**Byrdy Lynn:** One of the things I recognized, back then, but I didn't know what to call it. Now I know what to call it but I didn't know what to call it then. There were two things I experienced. One, I wondered why I was opening up brand new books and the food in the cafeteria was subway and healthy choices at my new high school in Oregon. In Texas, we had Taco Bell and unhealthy choices. And we had books falling apart that were being issued in the 1980s, people would write notes on it. It was like they didn't care. So I wondered, "What is this difference and why? Why did we have metal detectors at my other school? Maybe there were there were a few bad kids that we're trying to bring weed on campus, but they're selling full on cocaine out of lockers in my school in Oregon and they have no dog sniffing, no metal detectors. They're bringing knives. They're bringing guns. And I'm like, something's not right.

I just didn't like the institutional difference, and I feel like institutional racism was right before my eyes there. That kind of opened up my eyes. And then when I was in Texas, besides being bullied and going through all of that that I was going through, not once, do I ever remember being made to feel bad because I was a Black girl. Not ever. And so, when I went to Oregon, then that was just one more thing, I'm like "okay great not being bullied about not having the best clothes or having big glass lenses or anything like that. Now I'm being bullied and called the N word. And because of the color of my skin because there's a problem with the fact that I'm Black." I think that that experience alone had me really face the thought of racism. First of all there's nothing that I can do. I'm unapologetically a Black young girl. I can't change this. I can't change it no matter. I would never want to change being Black. But when I was being bullied for having big bifocal glasses, you can change it. I could get contacts, and begged my parents for that. I could save money. Holes in my shoes and things, that's all changeable. But not the color of my skin.



I was mad because it was something that I couldn't change. It was something that I couldn't beg my parents to change. It was something that was a part of me and it's who I was. It really angered me, more or less, because I just I didn't understand it. I understand where the hate was coming from, from a teacher to the students. I wasn't accepted. And so I had to figure out because my dad at the time was so involved in his church that he just didn't really give much attention to what was going on with his girls trying to fit into school. I had to figure out "how am I going to face this?" And eventually I stood up for myself and I stood up for being a young Black girl and stood up for being Black. I thought it was just insanity that kids would treat me a certain way for something that I cannot fix and that I was born with. And I stood up to it.

**Lindsay Preston:** Yeah, and you delivered this poem, which is like one of my favorite moments in the book. I read that poem over and over. I even have it flagged Byrdie. My favorite part in the whole book. Oh my gosh, a girl wrote this. It's so good. In it you talk about being happily proudly and unapologetically Black. So I want to end with that. What does that mean to you?

**Byrdy Lynn:** For me, being Black is everything. It's my whole life makeup. I can't change it. I'm unapologetically Black. And I think it's the same for if, you know you're a white woman, you're unapologetically a white woman.

**Lindsay Preston:** Right.

**Byrdy Lynn:** And same thing for an Asian and Hispanic. We're all human. So for me it just means being a part of the Black culture. I'm excited for my culture and to be a part of the human race. Being Black, there's some history there, very sad and rich history. But it's embracing all of it. And when I embrace all of the history that exists because of the color of my skin, then I'm embracing me and I'm loving me. Essentially I'm passing down a culture to my child. And I will say, not only am I Black, but I had to ask my mom, why does he check Black because, I am actually Black and native Indian. I have Cherokee, Chickasaw and Black feed on top of Black. My mom's full blooded Indian and my dad is Black. It was just easier for her to just a check Black instead of trying to find out. So I embrace all my cultures.

**Lindsay Preston:** Byrdie, when I hear your story I think this is a woman who has fallen in love with herself despite the people who you do turn to to look for love not giving it to you. You had to overcome that. And then in that process of falling in love with yourself, then it's like okay I love myself so much. I'm gonna speak my truth now. And no matter what anybody says about it I know I can come back to me because I love myself so deeply. Is that how it feels?



**Byrdy Lynn:** Yeah.

**Lindsay Preston:** I know you're a very spiritual person, and so going back to God to, and having that different relationship because you talk about in your book the church, and how you saw some of the, I don't know we want to call it, not so great things. So it sounds like you've come, and had a relationship with God now that feels really good to you.

**Byrdy Lynn:** Yeah, I do. And one thing that I was really nervous about is I wanted to put my thoughts out there, especially, I didn't know how the Black church would receive it, or church period because my dad was Southern Baptist. I didn't know how it would be received. I went through a lot just seeing the other side of church, and behind the scenes. And I didn't agree with it or like it so I didn't want to be a part of that for a very long time. Because I felt like a bunch of hypocrites. But they have nothing to do with my personal relationship with God.

So I had to eventually realize that. But those are some very real feelings that I wanted to put out there because a lot of pastors need to understand that the way they raised their children, has to be normal. You can't make them different. They're not perfect, neither is a pastor. Although you have people looking up to you. It's like if you're in the position of a leader. When you're leading people and they're following, okay, great. You continue to set an example but it doesn't mean that you have to set a perfect example, because that's why people are following you and they like you because you're authentic to who you are and God has blessed you with wisdom. But, to put that pressure on your children, very much so yes I put that in the book because they need to know church hurt is very real, with a lot of people.

**Lindsay Preston:** Yeah, and I'm so glad you touched on that because as you're talking, what I hear her saying is like they thought perfectionism was the ideal but it's really authenticity is the ideal. And you realize that and you found that in your own truth Byrdy, which is so powerful. So will you tell us where they can go find the book, and then you talk about a workbook you have now So can you tell us about that.

**Byrdy Lynn:** Yes. So you can find the book on amazon.com. We have paperback, hardback, audio book, and the E book. That's on Amazon and then on Byrdlynn.com, you can find my workbook. There's tons of things in this workbook. I don't know if you saw the baby pictures. Very colorful. This is from my heart. It's an embrace for me to the reader who wants to do a deeper dive and understand the process that I took for myself. Hopefully, if they have any questions you can also reach out. In the workbooks, at the very back, I included a page where I would sign it and write a personal note.



**Lindsay Preston:** That's so awesome Byrdy. Thank you for sharing your story with us and I hope everyone goes and get your book. As I said, I couldn't put it down. I'm like, oh my gosh more. I know you're putting out a part two, because we just get up to, I believe it was the end of college right.

**Byrdy Lynn:** End of high school.

**Lindsay Preston:** I'm like oh my god I have so what happens next. So when's part two coming out?

**Byrdy Lynn:** Part two, I am halfway through that now. I want you to realize and all the readers realize, putting my thoughts and my life out on paper is a very cathartic, healing process for me as well. So on part two, I'm trying to get it out by the end of this year, but if not, it'll come out in 2022. It's been a journey so far with part two between counselors and lawyers.

**Lindsay Preston:** You bring it up and then you're like, oh, here's some healing I need to do.

**Byrdy Lynn:** And it touches on me as a single mother, touches on me being homeless three times, it touches on me, I worked in a strip club. There there are a lot of things I had to go through, even the biggest thing that I'm overcoming right now, today as we speak. I know you don't see the tears, you don't hear me crying, but it's more or less having my son taken for me, from my ex mother in law and my ex-husband. And what that was like. There's a lot there. That's one of the reasons why I'm visiting with an attorney to kind of help sort that out so that people can know what to do when the system fails you. Because the system failed me. And there are some things too that I want to start pushing out towards Congress to change some laws, so that the system doesn't continue to fail people, as it failed me.

**Lindsay Preston:** Yeah. Oh my gosh Byrdy I can't wait to hear more, but are you at a place now where life is settled? You have to be to put this in the world, because that takes a lot of your nervous system, but is life pretty good?

**Byrdy Lynn:** Life is interesting. Life is funny (laughs). It is very funny indeed but I got to the place where I was able to get over my early childhood life. Absolutely. I'm on top of the world. But just kind of dealing and sorting through my adult life and now taking on being the CEO of a property management company and my tech company. I am enjoying those journeys.



**Lindsay Preston:** Yeah, also being a mom.

**Byrly Lynn:** Yes and he is in college. I'm so proud of him. He's doing good. Girl he's got a B in calculus. You didn't get it from Mommy.

**Lindsay Preston:** Oh my gosh that's awesome. Well thank you again Byrly. We all bow to you and you starting this way of speaking your truth. I just did an episode on this and you are living proof of it so, major props to you. Thank you so much.

[music]

Hey there, Miss Unstoppable. Thanks so much for tuning into this episode. If you enjoyed it, share it with a friend. Send them a picture of this episode via text, via email, share it on social media, I'm sure they would be so appreciative to know these strategies and tips on how to accomplish your dreams. If you are ready to guarantee you're going to accomplish your goals and dreams, then it's time to start coaching with me.

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