



*the*  
*Perfect*

**LIE**

**EACH DAY I  
LIVE A PER-  
FECT LIE.**

I'm serious. If you looked at me you would notice I am the perfect woman. I am the complete package, with nothing missing. I proudly display my perfect marriage to a perfect husband and offer up for review my four perfect teenagers. If you followed me to work, you would see I am the President and CEO of a perfect company. I read my Bible and pray daily. I have the perfect ministry. But I live the perfect lie!

Don't look too deep . . . don't ask too many questions. My lie is believable. In fact, I've been lying now for over 20 years, using my perfect life as my cover. I smile, I pray, I share (but I don't share too much), and I lie to cover up the ten years of my life that I don't want anyone to know about. If people knew the truth about me, they might look at me differently and see me as not so perfect. So, I lie. Unfortunately, as I cover that up, I also cover up how my Lord and Savior miraculously saved me from becoming a murder statistic during a ten-year relationship fraught with horrific domestic abuse.

**Blown Cover**

Let me share with you how my cover was blown. In 2007, after a weeklong Mexico mission trip with my family and

others from my church, we jockeyed for seat assignments on the long ride home from Ensenada to Northern California. My family divided between cars and I shared the ride with Gretchen, a single mom, with two boys.

I didn't know Gretchen well and surface conversation floated from topic to topic as we steered her car north to the promise of flush toilets and hot showers. I delicately asked Gretchen about the father of her boys, immediately cringing when she exhaled. Gretchen glanced into the rearview mirror, confirming the steady sounds of sleep from tired young boys, and began to talk.

Gretchen unfolded her story as a love-struck, headstrong young girl, who left her loving family behind in Germany and traveled to America to marry a handsome GI. Her fairy-tale marriage to Prince Charming deteriorated into an abusive relationship with a cruel and vicious husband. Gretchen reluctantly left the marriage a wounded adult.

In my head, I heard God's voice. "Tell her! Tell her what I brought you through! Tell her how I saved your life. Tell her the truth." I swallowed hard, feeling compelled to share.

This time, for once in my life, I obeyed. My voice quivering, my heart pounding, I shared my story with Gretchen over hundreds of freeway miles. It began with a 19-year-old girl, who didn't listen to her parents urging, quit school, quit her job, sold her car, eloped, and moved over 400 miles away from any family. I told Gretchen my hasty decision caused me to suffer severe domestic abuse and become a captive in an invisible prison for the next ten years.

I explained the evolution of my own fairy-tale romance gone horribly wrong.

*By Jeanette  
M. Towne*



The abuse started with small bouts of profane threats, progressed to physical beatings, and finally to threats of murder with God rescuing me as I was about to be attacked with a hammer.

Gretchen listened to the details of my horrid life filled with abuse, and cheered the celebration of God plucking me out of the mire. Then, her eyes moist with tears, she encouraged me to tell my story. She urged me to tell others about my journey, showing God's miraculous touch in a seemingly hopeless situation.

### The Story Goes Public

Okay, so the truth was out. But just to this one woman. I could ask her to keep it to herself and continue my façade. If I told my story of the downward spiral of abuse I suffered and shared the spiritual celebration of my salvation, then everyone would know and I would no longer be able to hide.

One problem though . . . by pretending those ten years of abuse never happened I was also pretending God's miraculous rescue had never happened. I wasn't giving Him the glory for saving me, nor was I opening my life to warn, encourage, and inspire another.

A few weeks after the car ride back from Mexico I received a two-page handwritten letter. Handwritten. Not a text, not an email, not even a printed letter; it was handwritten . . . from Gretchen. I gulped, my throat immediately dry, as I read her letter pleading with me to tell the truth about my miracle and to give God the glory for what He did in my life.

I argued with the request. I argued with myself. I (*yes, I'm going to admit it*) argued with God! Why on earth at this smooth and blessed point in my life would I open up this horrible chasm and expose my lie, leaving me vulnerable and putting a big blemish on the perfect charade?

I prayed long and hard about sharing my story. Soon I felt God's hand on me and heard His

voice in my heart urging me to get my story out on paper and into the hands of the people He wanted to reach. In obedience, I turned my "perfect lie" into a book, stirring up all of my insecurities, but for the first time telling the truth.

### Telling the Truth

During the Christmas season of 2009, we were finishing up dinner when two Hispanic women appeared on my doorstep. The older woman explained in broken English that she heard about my story and wanted to see if I could speak with her troubled young friend. I looked down at the younger, very pregnant teen. Through a few hours of prayers and tears, the young girl unveiled her story. She confessed she was involved in a horrible and abusive relationship with the father of her child. We prayed some more and I counseled her to get help, to tell someone the truth, praying that God would save her physically and spiritually.

Later, I spoke at a local church with total transparency, receiving enthusiastic feedback from fellow Christians about my journey. They told me how compelling my story was and that they were shocked and saddened and encouraged by everything I had gone through. Some cried.

Surprisingly, I found myself very disheartened by this. I had opened up and became vulnerable, sharing it all, to save the lost . . . not to shock the saved! I brooded and chastised myself for exposing my "lie," becoming a "freak show" to entertain my Christian friends.

God heard my plea to understand His ways. The following week, I received



a typed letter from a very accomplished, beautiful, and gifted Christian woman I know. This letter knocked me to the ground emotionally. My friend shared her “secret lie” of being the child in a family where she witnessed the sadistic abuse of her mother at the hand of a cruel stepfather. She had never shared this with anyone but her husband. Her own children didn’t know the frightening episodes of domestic abuse she endured.

God clearly spoke to my heart. Yes, He wanted me to share my story to help save His lost, but He also wanted me to share my story allowing Him to *help heal* His saved. Risk self to save another. Tell the truth to point His people to Him.

## Transparency at Last

Looking back, I can see the day vividly, as if it were yesterday. I crouched down by the vanity in my bathroom, hands up to protect my life, eyes pleading with my sadistic attacker, who was poised with hammer in hand ready to crush my skull. I prayed fervently and God showed up in a miraculous way. Though I could not see the spiritual, I believe there was an army of angels, sent by God to protect me, causing my attacker to drop the hammer and let me live. I escaped that day without

looking back, never to return.

God has touched me and healed me, bringing me to a point where I can look at what He brought me through and use my experiences to help others. No, I don’t have the perfect life, but I’m not lying anymore. Are you? Many of you have been in relationships like I was in. Many of you have things you’ve stuffed down and covered up. We cannot lie anymore and pretend to live the perfect life, smiling and hiding what God wants to do in our lives. We must allow Him to use us to impact others for Him.

Today, God has given me the courage to uncover my “perfect lie,” to become transparent, to share my story. My heartfelt prayer and challenge to you is to confess your “lie” and tell the truth. By opening up your life, you can enter into His will, continue the process of healing, and eventually use your story to help another.

Jeanette Towne is the president and CEO of a U.S. based Communications Corporation. She has been happily married to her husband and best friend for almost twenty years. Together they enjoy their church ministry and raising four active teenagers in the western United States. (See page 82 for a review of her book, *From Prisoner to President*.)



## WARNING Signs of ABUSE

1. Family history of abuse
2. Difficulty maintaining close relationships
3. Talking disparagingly about an ex-girlfriend/wife
4. Controlling
5. Extreme jealousy
6. Raging temper
7. Makes you feel inadequate and unworthy
8. Blames fights on you—accuses you of infidelity
9. Verbally assaults you
10. Physically assaults you

**If these warning signs are evident in your relationship or that of someone you know, it’s time to stop hiding and get some help.**