Start Out Small

How Lolisa Gibson, an HIV educator and author of a book, The Way I See It, faced her fear of ostracism.

December 12, 2011 As told to Lauren Tuck

In 2004 I was diagnosed with HIV. My mother was the only one who knew. I'd also discovered how strong HIV stigma and discrimination were, and I became fearful of disclosing to other family and friends.

To become more educated, I started working to raise awareness and teach others about the virus. But I wanted to tell people my story.

Then something hit me. Three years after my diagnosis, I still hadn't told the people closest to me I was positive. I feared their reaction. But I also knew that by going public with my status I could change someone's life for the better. It was something I wanted to do. I just didn't know how, and I was scared.

Finally, I disclosed to a small group of my cousins. They gave me positive encouragement that helped me continue toward my goal.

Today, I've traveled around the world and shared my story with people of all ages. That's how I managed to overcome my fear and eventually gathered the courage to write a memoir.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/Lolisa-Gibson-HIV-21592-4228