The role of exposure to life-shock experiences, such as civil wars, genocide, or both, in shaping the personality traits of individual entrepreneurs and contributing to their success is receiving significant attention in entrepreneurship research. Some authors have even coined the term “underdog entrepreneurs” to describe those who have overcome personal adversity to become successful entrepreneurs. In this qualitative study, we took a phenomenology approach. We conducted 25 in-person interviews with sub-Saharan African immigrants in Portland, Maine, who survived civil wars, genocide, or both in their countries of origin. Despite deviating from the traditional path of studying sub-Saharan African immigrant entrepreneurs, our findings indicate that these individuals view their life-shock experiences as optimistic resources that have helped them build strong character and the capacity to successfully manage their businesses, even during times of crisis or disruption.