

It'll make things so much better

Marcy: My name is Marcy. I'm married to Michael. He was a Marine, and he served in Iraq. He was given 10 days notice before he left, and we were engaged to be married. I think the fact that only 10 days was a little scary, because we were running around trying to get him things that he would need, and you know the fact that was I going to be able to talk to him? How much would I be able to talk to him? Was I going to have any kind of email contact or anything? You know, there's a lot of uncertainty. We didn't really know, and I kept telling him, "Whatever happens there, you need to you know do whatever you need to do to come back alive, and you know tell me everything. Don't keep anything a secret from me. I want to know everything." And it didn't really happen that way. He kept a lot from me.

After six months, I could tell something was...by his voice. I could hear it in his voice. He's a very good speaker. He's very fluent, and I could hear in the way he spoke to me, and his tone, that he was...I could tell he was very stressed out. And so, I really kind of probed him to find out what was going on, and that's when he started telling me about things. Then, I said to him, "Well, you know, if you want to get married to me, then you have to go get help before I'll marry you in front of our family and friends."

I was working fulltime, going to school for my masters, and you know I had family and friends, but they didn't really get it. They didn't really have anyone who had been in the military or understand, and I went to get help myself. I went to a psychologist, because I thought I'm way in over my head. I have no idea how to handle any of these things he's telling me about.

Really barbaric things were happening that I...I was like how I'm supposed to help him? I have no idea how to help this person coming back. So, I saw someone, who actually had a husband, who had been in Vietnam, so she had some experience with living with someone and being married to someone, who had combat experience.

Well, he's different. He had like a very blank look, or it was either blank look or a sad look in his eyes. It was just like the light had been taken out of his eyes. That's one of the first things I noticed. Then, I noticed anger, road rage. Driving with him was very different. He was very jumpy. Any loud noises, he would duck. He had nightmares, would wake up, you know just spring up from sleeping, a dead sleep. Divorce was thrown around. I basically said, "I can't live the rest of my life like this. Something has to change, or I'm going to have to divorce you. You know, I just can't do it." He pretty quickly, within the first month of him being back, he did see the person I was seeing. She spent two hours with him the first time she was with him, and then she said to me when I saw her again, "We have a lot of work ahead of us."

His mother had someone living across the street from her, who used the VA and spoke highly of it, and he kept saying to my husband's mother, you know, "You need to get him to the VA, get him to the VA." And so, he did, and he still goes to the VA, has appointments. So, he's doing better. It's a long process. It's a long road. I think, he realizes he'll always need to work on himself and have someone to talk to. There's definitely a change, and there's times where he regresses, but then it gets better again.

Marriage is work even in the best of circumstances. You know, you have to work on it. You have to talk to each other. You have to communicate. You have to make time for



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each other, and it's going to be rough at times, but you know it's not easy to dig in and talk about all these things, and you know especially for the Veteran. I mean, they have all these stories and terrible things they've seen that's difficult to deal with. If you get help, it's okay. It's a good thing to get help, and it will improve your quality of your life, you know. It'll make everything so much better.



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