

Couples therapy

Robert: My name is Robert and I'm a United States Navy Veteran from 1971 through 1975 and I served in Naples, Italy.

Vanessa: I'm Vanessa his wife of 1 year.

Robert: When I got over to Italy it was, I actually got arrested over there and I was raped in prison, and I never dealt with it until I got back to the United States and I hid it for a very long time. I did not want to deal with anyone. I isolated. I was constantly depressed because I held myself responsible for what had occurred.

So, for many, many years I drank, and I drugged. I was in and out of mental institutions and rehabs for a very long time and finally I actually asked for help, and I went to the VA Medical Center and that's when I began my long journey.

When I met Vanessa, you know I'll be honest, people say they don't believe in love at first sight, guess what it is love. It was love at first sight.

Vanessa: We met at a club. I was going to hear my girlfriend sing not knowing that the girlfriend was a friend of his.

Robert: We eventually got married very quickly, within 7 months. So, initially it was rough starting out. You know, even after you know as they call it, the honeymoon phase because I was still dealing with some stuff and not letting her in.

Vanessa: I thought it was, he had a Dr. Jekyll, Mr. Hyde personality and I didn't know it was PTSD. He didn't tell me until after we were married. He would yell and he would scream, and he would just have temper tantrums.

Robert: Should would talk about you know, why did I say this or why did I say that or why are you yelling, and I would even get more upset and yell even more.

Vanessa: It was at the point of me wanting to walk away. That's when he realized he needed to tell me what's going on and he explained to my why he reacts the way he reacts, and we need therapy.

Robert: I went to the VA and went to my mental health provider and asked her, you know could I get into therapy for family therapy so she can really understand as to what I was dealing with, I thought it's a tremendous help in terms of our relationship and my growth. She's actually got an opportunity to hear some of the things that I've gone through and when I you know, do wake up with sweats or can't sleep or something like that she kind of understands.

Vanessa: I understand it now and I try to figure out what triggers it and try to stay away from that trigger.

Robert: I listen to her now whereas before I was not listening at all.

Vanessa: Yeah, he doesn't have the fits anymore. He calms himself down and then he comes back and then we discuss that. So, the therapy was a really big help to us.



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Robert: I never thought that anything was wrong with me. I thought I was the great I am, and I had to come to believe that I was the great I'm not. It took me a long, long time, too many years but I'm one of those firm believers that it's always better late than never and it's never too late to ask for help, whether it be at the VA Hospital itself or at the Vet Center, the community services. There's so, so much out there for us, know that you do have support and especially when you're dealing with you know a relationship. If you're in a relationship, let that person know.

Vanessa: I think first of all, we have to talk to one another to find out, why are we behaving this way. What is causing the behavior and what can we do about the behavior?

Robert: Talk to somebody and if you need to call me, then call me.

Vanessa: And work on it.

Robert: Love you!

Vanessa: Love you too!



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