

## My emotions don't control me anymore

**Marty:** My name is Marty. I served in the Army Reserve. I deployed to Afghanistan from 2002-2003. I deployed to Iraq from 2004-2005, and I deployed to Iraq a second time from 2007-2008. I felt proud that I was able to step up and do my job. My father had been in the military, my grandfather, and I felt like this is my time. This is my turn to watch the line.

Coming home was a little weird. I had a chance to jump on a flight before the rest of my detachment. And so, I came home by myself. I was back here in Virginia, and it's a strange feeling. I almost don't know how to describe it, and I struggled. I did not do real well. I felt like I didn't fit in with most of the people. My experiences in Afghanistan were completely different than anything any of my classmates had gone through. My grades were failing. So, I worked out with my Reserve Unit. I asked if I could volunteer to go to Iraq, and I thought well, that seemed to be the only place that made sense to me. That coming back was much rougher even than my first tour. I found a job as an Electrician based off my military training. I would go to work. I didn't feel like my job was important. I seemed to have every thing that you should have by the time you're in your mid 20s, a decent career, a good girlfriend, had my own car, I was working, definitely working to buy a house, and it felt empty. I would wake up. It was hard for me to want to go to work. It was hard, I was moody. I was always angry. It was a pretty rough time. My relationship with my parents went into the sewer. I had done two tours, and I felt guilty for not having done more. I felt that nothing was ever going to be better. That I was always going to feel this way.

One day, I just sort of woke up. I was like, "I don't have to feel like this." And so, I started going back to church. I talked with the Bishop at my church, and we started working through a few things, and he suggested I go see somebody. He was a Psychiatrist that went to the same church I did. He helped bring some religious end of it, which brought me some healing I felt. And then, he was able to explain some of the brain chemistry behind why I was feeling and some of the way my brain was working as to what I was experiencing when and what I was feeling.

And so, the third tour, we went, we were part of the Surge in Iraq, and we happened to be in Southwest Baghdad, and even though that I had learned a lot of coping strategies from the Psychiatrist that I went to before, I found that I was having more difficulty using those coping strategies. This time, I went to the VA for counseling, and that has helped. I was in that therapy for about a year, nearly a year, and it helped me with a lot of the coping skills. I feel much better. I can deal with my emotions now. They don't control every day, I can control what I do that day. My emotions don't control me anymore, and that brings a huge amount of piece of mind, and hopefully the more of us that speak out about this, the more people will get help.



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