

## A spouse's support to overcome MST

**Todd:** Hello, my name is Todd. I'm married to Jodie. She's a marine Vet with PTSD, MST. We've been married for five years December 6<sup>th</sup>. We talk about it just about on a daily basis how much she misses it, how much she wishes she would have made a career of it instead of making the choice that she did to get out because of the situation she was in. She got raped. She was molested by two of her so-called friends. It's a difficult thing. This is the first year she's been able to really talk about it at length with me, and it hurt me so bad when she told me about it and it still does every time I think about it.

She's been getting help since 2004 through the VA, through individual therapy and she went through a course, I guess we moved in August of last year which was 2012, and she finished it up about March with a one-on-one PTSD therapist. This was the first time they made her really sit down and write about it, to talk about it, and I think that helped her out a lot and it helped me to really understand what it was and why certain times of the year she goes through the things that she does, but she was very hesitant of doing it because she didn't want to rehash it. But once she did, the anger came out from it. There was a lot of anger pent up and that kept her in a state of really not growing, you know, to be the best person she can. She still has the memories of it, but the anger is gone. I think she was able not to forgive them, but to forgive herself, because she was constantly blaming herself thinking it was her fault. She has gone to a couple of groups. She was in a group in West Virginia. She gives everything and tries that she feels is going to help. And I felt that the group that she went to there helped a little bit because she met a couple of women that had been in the same situation. And I think being in that group helped her see that she's not the only one.

Before, it's just a suffering through the mood swings, the mood changes, the anger, the un-trustfulness, never trusting anyone. Now, her heart and her mind are opening back up. She's open-minded to a lot of things now that she wasn't before. Now, she's open to listen to suggestions, looking at the other side, looking at how maybe things could be done better. So, it's a process now of just her mind opening back up and seeing that there's more to life than just, "Hey, this happened to me. I'm going to sit with it and be mad with it."

Now, she's more active. She's more into life, more into herself and writing. She likes to do poetry. She likes to, you know, when we go to church, she wants to do a dance team. You know, she wants to help these young women. I'm going to say it's one step at a time. It's a difficult choice to make because you feel you don't have a problem. You feel everybody else does. It's making the first step to know it's going to better your life. Don't be afraid to better your life and understand that, you know, you have a full life still in front of you regardless of what you went through in the military. From a spouse's point of view, you know, don't force. Do not force it upon them. You may have to be that ear to listen, that shoulder to cry on, and that compassionate person just to walk them through to the next stage.



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