

Facing a troubling past to become a better father

Moses: Moses. United States Marine Corps 1999 to 2006. My first appointment in 2004 I was with Mortuary Affairs and my last appointment in 2006 I was in Civil Affairs. Mortuary Affairs, it was the very first time that we had active duty people being deployed and supporting Mortuary Affairs and what we did is we picked up our fallen brothers and sisters in the middle of a combat zone. The nature of dying in battle is so unlike your everyday reality that it didn't even seem real half the time.

It was a couple months after I got out, that it started hitting me, what we did and what that meant. But there's several situations that just vivid, like they happened yesterday that I'll never forget. Going from a high-volume thing that we were doing in Mortuary Affairs to the nothingness of civilian world, especially job searching, was the worst thing that I could've done. I kinda became an adrenaline junky. So driving 150 made a lot of sense because you're near death and it was weird how much I missed that and you would just do stupid things to get there. You could pound a handle of vodka and pass out and it masked everything. I was afraid to talk to people. I didn't want to be seen as crazy. I'm invincible, like nothing get to me. That didn't get to me. Why is literally nothing getting to me and come to find out, that it did. It just took it, it manifested itself in a different way.

Then I met this girl and I thought she was the one and we had a really good relationship and then whenever I came back, it was just frayed. And one day we were, celebrating having a drink, nothing too crazy and somehow or another things escalated and I don't know how it happened, but I put my hands on her. I'm a 200, at that time I was 220 pounds, powerlifting and all that neat stuff and there's a 110-pound girl and somehow or another I pushed her. There was no conscious decision. It just, I reacted and how did I react so violent to someone I love? And it was looking at the damage, the damaged relationships and me not seeing my son. It was the first time that I was like, I know exactly what this is and I just got to admit it that I got it. Like this is PTSD. This is everything. And, calling the VA crying, just, I thought I failed everything and on some level I did. And it wasn't that I let it get to me, it's that I didn't seek help sooner.

That Monday I called, they saw me that Monday. They put me intake and by Tuesday, I was in front of a counselor and if they didn't get me that really fast help, I have no clue what would happen because even while in counseling, I had to go to some dark places to get to move forward and I can't imagine what would've happened if I didn't, go through that as soon as I did. The first process was just getting to know you, like "Hey, tell me what's going on." The lady, she was just really patient and what she really concentrated on was you gotta face these demons and it worked. But in facing these demons, one of the things she was really good at saying is, "This is gonna to take a while. It is getting better. You're more patient. You're more understanding. You're growing." And everything else around me started getting better. But for my son and I, it took a while to repair that relationship and for his mother and I it took a while to repair that relationship. And there's no way I was gonna fail that kid and that was such a huge motivator. You go from this high, high volume environment right where it's go, go, go, go, go, go and then you stop. Your brain's gonna catch up or your brain has got a ton of stuff to sift through and it's going to sift through it whether you're ready to or not. Immediately call the VA. Immediately. The VA is there for a reason. Everything is there for a reason and it is there to help you.



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