

## **This Marine got himself back up and got well**

**Vince:** My name is Vince. I was in the Marine Corps from '97 to '05. I went to Iraq twice. Out of high school I wasn't sure what I was gonna do with myself. So I went the route of the military to give myself some options. For the first tour we were all over the place. We were based out of Kuwait so we went up and down the country. Pretty quickly in combat I had the not so great experience of seeing one of my friends pass in front of me.

I went home and I was having some issues. Using the narcotics a lot to help with the PTSD issues. You know, the flashbacks and the nightmares and the uneasy feelings to kind of escape. I started abusing the medications. It was a new experience for me because I was in the Marine Corps for almost nine years and to be doing drugs like that was not my character.

There was a friend of mine named Kyle. He said "You know, Vince, you're a Marine. Get back up and keep on charging. You need to get over to the VA because there's some people that can help you." They helped him.

I was very skeptical at first about it. I didn't jump in fully at first. I just kind of tested the waters a little bit and slowly started to expose myself, but it helped so much. So much. Because God knows where I would be right now. Eventually with the VA I got back on track and I got help for that. I got on medications that weren't narcotics for my issues. I started going to a lot of therapy. I started going to a PTSD program that helped a lot.

I suffered a tragedy in October. My fiancé passed. She had a seizure and she died. She was in my life for a reason too, because she helped me. She dealt with a lot of my crap and helped me through it. Really stood there. So she helped a lot. I started to get myself the help I needed and that was kind of a hard to ask for help. It's also not in my character. It wasn't just for me but for my son as well.

The thing that's really working with this particular psychologist that I'm seeing is she really started dissecting my life, you know, piece by piece. So I could really analyze what got me to the point, what led to it, and I can understand and learn how not to go down that road again.

The big turning point was when I finally decided to get up and get out, start going to school again. So going to school was huge. It got me out there, it got me interacting again. Making my appointments with the VA is very important and taking my medication as prescribed is important. There's a lot of things that come into play in getting myself back on track.



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