

## The courage to reach out for support

**Jack:** Here's an important analogy. You watch any animal that's hurt, what does it do? It withdraws, and the animals have a trust in existence that they either get better or they die, you know? So it's real normal to withdraw.

**Bryan:** I'm a pretty extroverted, amicable person, but I didn't want anything to do with anybody. I didn't want to talk to anybody, I just sat in my room and drink, all the time.

**Tessa:** You see yourself, like, kind of withdrawing a little bit or looking at somebody that you used to spend every day with and loved every minute of every day with, if you start looking at them differently or feeling any kind of resentment or annoyance or anything like this, that's one way you can know that there's something going on.

**Tim:** My life just was slowly shrinking. If I went golfing, I went golfing alone. The things that I liked to do, hunting, I just didn't want to do anymore. I didn't really want to do much of anything anymore.

**Scott:** I felt like people were looking at me like I was strange, like something was off, and I don't know if it was something personal that was going on inside of me, but I just started to feel really isolated.

**Chris:** I called it a bubble — it happens when you get back and it happens when you're injured. You kind of go into this bubble. It usually consists of home, work and a select few friends, and you don't want to interact with anything outside of that bubble.

**Marylyn:** The isolation, the withdrawal, when you family doesn't know what to say to you and family and friends don't know and can't make the connection between what you experienced in the military and how that's manifesting when they interact with you.

**Bryan:** It takes another marine or another — somebody to understand you, another person that's been there to just slap you and be like, "Hey, get out of that room, stop drinking, let's go out and do something." If it weren't for my friends taking me out and pulling me out of that room and making me go do stuff, I don't know how bad it would have gotten.

**Marylyn:** Isolation, withdrawal, is not going to get you the end result that you need. You want to get back into life, you want to get back enjoying your life, the things that you like to do and being able to explore new things, so you're going to eventually have to talk to someone and connect with someone.

**Jack:** Isolation is the worst place to be. That's going in the wrong direction. When you isolate and pull yourself away from existence that's not a path to health. What you need to do is integrate back into existence and there's programs, people wanting to help.

**Marylyn:** What benefited me the most was going to the Vet Center, being in the support groups of combat women Veterans and listening to their stories.

**Bryan:** You can't isolate yourself, you have to surround yourself with good people that want to see you do better and you have to take advantage of the programs at the VA or the nonprofit organizations that are there to help Veterans out.



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