

A son helps his father decades after combat

Dusty: Family was very understanding. My dad being a former Marine. He's been there done that. My wife was extremely understanding she served in the Navy same time period as I did. So, we'd met after I had already come back. You know I confessed to her all my fears all my nightmares everything that I've ever done and I let the cards fall where they may. Either she was gonna like me or she wasn't.

You know my mom was extremely set back by it. You know her biggest thing is like well where's the teddy bear that I had when you're growing up and now you're this mean constantly edgy angry person. And I'm like I'm still the same person I just don't know how to act. You know you're trained to do something and it gets so ingrained into being, you've got to be lifeless to do your job. You got to put all everything aside to make sure that your brother and sisters come home. So, when you come back the transition to being you know a soldier, a marine, a fighting force, to transition back to okay now I've got to take care of my wife my kids you know you're out trying to raise a daughter you know be a loving husband.

You know I had a very troubled childhood. My dad was never diagnosed he had the same problems, same issues as I did. It took me coming back from Iraq being the same way he was when I was growing up and I looked at him I said if I'm man enough to get help so are you. So, 35 years later he goes to VA and ends up diagnosed with PTSD and has had it his entire life.

So, I guess through my figuring out who I am and rehabilitating it has helped other people like my father. When your dad looks at you and goes "you know what I'm really sorry for your childhood. I wish I had known about this then." I mean that's a leap in the right direction and it helps resolve old issues and I guess it takes having those issues to understand why he had issues. I've seen the difference. He used to be is completely antisocial as anybody could be. He didn't want people in his home, didn't want to be around new people and it's just a totally, it's a 360 compared to what I grew up with.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

MAKE THE
CONNECTION