

I was going through life numb

Aaron: My name is Aaron Brash, United States Navy, corpsman. I spent a lot of my time with the Marine Corp. In 2004 I deployed as a Iraqi security detachment. Well the first day of that operation relative of building it, we got up there in the middle of the night, took over some houses in the area and in the morning I had woken up and you know seen some smoke plumes out in the background and I said "Hey I'm gonna go on this porch" that is the minute a mortar landed 10 meters in front of me.

When I got back I started feeling numb. Because I didn't want to attach myself to my wife, my kids, people I knew. I was going around life numb, but I was going through the range of motion just to make it seem like it wasn't. And about a year after being back that's when it started to really affect me. I was quick to anger, quick to understand that the adrenaline rush was part of what I wanted to feel some times and not that I was ultimately that angry, but that I needed to feel that angry to hit a peak where I was feeling like things were intense, I need that intensity a little bit and then I'd come down from it. I definitely started having the nightmares were to the point where when you wake up I might need to call somebody because I lost them in the nightmare and it seemed so real that I really just needed to talk to somebody.

My wife finally said, "Hey you know what you probably need to get some help, you need this..." I was being like no, no I am taking care of Marines, I'm living vicariously through my care for them and everything is good, but when I stepped into the psychologist office and broke down in tears the first time I talked to him. I had to heal from the body and I also had to heal from the mind too. That's part of what happened. When I went into the psychiatrist, he basically said you know let it out.

Then it was suggested I start going to these groups and at first it was all combat Vets in these groups and those groups started working out really well. It was really a true understanding of how to articulate some of the thoughts in my head and to listen to other guys and situations and realize those are paths probably I don't want to go down, but I could see myself heading that way if I didn't have his insight and I didn't take it serious enough to say let me try to alter something in my life, in my course of action so I could better adjust and what tools can I have to adjust to that? Listening to some of their tools was interesting. And I think that if you have something that you believe in whether it is God or whatever it is, but that right there kind of just set me on a path of betterness.

So I had to find little tickets of hope in every step of my way because it's real easy to fall back on. Well how can I believe in anything? If you don't have something to believe in, or hope or a wife, or family that care about you. You know I still feel the numbness, I still feel all the symptoms but I have management of it in a lot of ways. Guy's combat wounded, I took a mortar round, I got hit and now I'm just trying to make it myself, I said but you're going to be here, you are going to make the best of it. You transition out in a positive light. I wear this purple heart on my hat to remember those guys that are buried with theirs. They are not here, they don't to get to be with us. At any given time they would love to switch places with us, but they can't. It's our duty to live up to their desire to see their family and friends and people.



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