

## **I stay in the center so I don't fall off the side**

**Corey:** My name is Corey, United States Marine Corps. I served from '93 to '95. I wanted a career, I wanted to be a Drill Instructor, and after three promotions, gung-ho, 298 out of 300 PFT, I developed heel spurs and back pain and they told me, "You have to medically discharge," after I begged them to stay in.

When I got out in '95 I felt like my life was at a standstill. I couldn't do anything. I was disappointed because I got out of the Marine Corps. A lot of my friends were still in the Service and were going to combat, and I didn't feel like I was a Marine because I didn't finish my four years. So, I held that inside. Mentally it had me going through a lot of situations mentally, and that is when I ran to the alcohol. I went to the cocaine and things like that, to the drugs I should say. And things just started going downhill.

I really didn't get along with people too much because I was quick to temper, quick to outburst. My patience... I didn't have any patience because I had a lot of stuff going on inside of me that I didn't speak about. So, if you said something wrong to me, instead of talking to you, I would get aggressive. It affected a lot of things, a lot of personal issues with my family and I wanted to be alone a lot. I didn't wanna be bothered, and I was really disappointed.

At that point I said, "The world would be a better place without me," and that's when I tried to take my life. I was in a coma for five days and then when I came out of the coma I said, "I want help, I want help."

When I walked into the VA in 2009, I was diagnosed with like four or five things; major depression, PTSD, bipolar, and of course substance abuse. I went for substance abuse at Castle Point VA and I stayed in there for four years, and it was the best thing that I had ever did. It helped me work on my anger. It helped me work on my triggers, things that'd get me upset and make me want to run to the alcohol and the drugs. It changed my life. I started thinking about others instead of just myself, by their help and knowing that I wasn't alone, there was 15 to 20 people in my group. They started sharing a lot of things that I thought was only... that happened only to me. And then once I hear them share about it, it gave me the green light to open up and share about my experience. And then I felt... once I shared about it, I felt like at home, I felt like I could share about anything.

And I also have a depression group that I went through, a depression group. It allowed me that there is a chance that I can get better, but I have to work at it. Those classes and the mental health and the group, I have changed a lot.

My family realized I was getting better over the years. I was able to have friends, because before I wasn't able to... I didn't really get along with a lot of people. I now just celebrated nine years, you know. So, now I do a lot to help out, to give back, to help out. It's just is feeling... it feels so good in the heart, so I like to go in and tell other Veterans that you're not alone, that I've been there. So, what I do is I stay involved. I stay in the center, so I don't fall off the side.

If you need to seek help, just go into the VA and tell them. You know, just let people know. You just keep reaching out. You can't give up. We're not alone, we can do this together. Together we can do anything.



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