

A wife of a determined Marine shares their story

Chrissy: I'm a Marine Corps wife whose husband lost his leg in Iraq on June 6, 2007. I thought he was on patrol but I got a call and it didn't really zone into anything other than "How would you feel if I came home missing a limb, and I would not be mad at you if you did not want to stay with me." And I was like, "You're—what's going on, you know, no, of course I'd stay with you, you know, I didn't—you know, your leg does not make you...my, you know, soon to be husband," because we were engaged, and then I talked with another guy who said they'd be in contact with me to let me know the details. I have medical training, but it still didn't prepare me. He was not himself, he was on heavy narcotics and his spirits were down, you know, but I could tell when I came in the room his spirits were up again, and it was a good visit, and everybody was welcoming and it was just good to be by his side finally.

We were at Walter Reed for almost two years. He went through extensive therapy where I would see him screaming or crying and he would just be like "Just push harder, just push harder," you know? And it was a lot because you really have to push those muscles in order to gain even 2% back, use. It was really hard, because my husband's a Marine and to be able to take those physical things that he can't do, he was not ready to admit that, so it was very important for the medical care, whoever's beside the person, it I found out was so important for them to be able to know when to push, know when to back off.

He had some mood swings. He would just be miserable; he would not want to get out of bed until four o'clock in the evening. He would wake up and he would just be sweating, and he would be, like, at first he wouldn't—I think he had more nightmares than what I know, but the ones that I know about he would just wake up and he would just not know where he was, and then sooner or later once he got into the counseling and he started, you know, he thought he was doing it for me, he started realizing that he needed some of it, and it was just a process. It's like losing someone in your family. He lost his leg, you know? The man he came back is not the same man that went, you know, and so he had to relearn how to live in that man's body.

I knew he had a problem and I knew that he was depressed, but I knew how I would handle it, but soldiers coming back from war are so different, and so that therapist knew how to talk to him. He started seeing that it's okay, you know, "I can do this, I can talk with someone who knows what's going on and it's not bad to talk about it," you know, and so that's what he got from it.

I'd say it took him about a year to get out of the woods totally. He still has—he just started working, which was a big thing for him because he needed it. He needed some type of being. When they're in the military they have a purpose, they have a job, you know, he didn't have that anymore, and so he needed that. There are going to be good days, there are going to be bad days, and they're just days. If I can help anyone to know that you can make it, you know, you can fight this and it's a long fight, you know, but it's worth fighting.



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