

Addressing issues made all the difference

Travis: My name is Travis. I was in the Army for 11 years. We got stationed up in Mosul, which is northern Iraq. I'm in a Stryker—brigade, a Stryker is one of the new army trucks that they have, and we had two Strykers on an intersection. My Stryker got hit with an RPG. I think mentally I kind of blocked it out. It took about maybe a good 10 seconds before I realized I knew that I was seriously injured. Come to find out my right leg was pretty much gone on the blast and my left leg was pretty messed up, so they ended up getting me back to the field hospital. I flatlined about four times as they were trying to keep me stable there. I don't remember much then. I remember people yelling at me, I remember people yelling "Breathe!"

Transition was kind of long, you know. I started walking when I was down in the VA down in San Diego. I kind of pushed as much as I could but I was also dealing with all of the emotions, you know, because I was just injured, so it's, like, I'm injured dealing with these emotions and dealing with family life, and then also dealing with walking on top of it, you know, it was a lot. I didn't know how I was going to even live anymore at that time, you know. I went from being in the Army, you know, with guys that I've served with for years, to all of a sudden it being gone, you know, so all that support that I used to have was gone.

Part of me feels like if I wasn't injured maybe that could have changed or, you know, something, and so yeah, guilt, guilt a big thing. I went through anger, I went through what-ifs. That was the biggest thing, is all the what ifs. What if I was just standing at the time? What if we left a couple minutes later? What if this? What if that? You know, tons of what ifs, and that was really hard to get past. I would close my eyes and I would kind of reenact and relive what happened and I would get to the point to where I would close my eyes and I would get to the point...everything's so vivid, you know, I think some people probably block it out but for me, I mean, I can close my eyes and remember the smells, remember everything.

Me and my ex-wife were having extreme problems and we were going to get a divorce. I was living in the basement at the time. One day, it was on I think a Friday, we were outside yelling, my anger level was just through the roof at that time, and we had two cars, I mean, they're both mine but she drove one and I dented it, like, in two places, and she ended up going over to the neighbor's house. I went back inside. About maybe half an hour later the police come, so I get taken to jail for domestic violence, and a part of the plea bargain was to go to this diversions program. It forced me to deal with my anger issues that I had, and then at the time I didn't realize, you know, I thought, you know, it wasn't a problem, but going through the counseling I figured yeah, it is, and it's something that I definitely need to change and realize, just getting the tools to deal with the anger issues, and that was really important and, you know, I feel like that's probably the best thing that's happened to me since I've been injured. Unfortunately if that never have happened, if the incident never have happened, I probably wouldn't ever have gotten counseling, you know, I probably would have just been, like, "I can deal with it," but because, you know, it happened and it forced me to do it it's definitely changed me.

Because I got my life back on track, because I got everything going in the right direction, I mean, I've found a girl that's amazing, and that's something through counseling that we really dealt with a lot, too, is finding the right person in your life. Talking and getting



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help...you have to, you know, it's you have to get your story out, you have to talk about it, even if you don't want to you have to, it's the only way to go to that healing process.



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