

Recovering from a father's death

Perry: My name is Perry. I served 4 years in the Marine Corp and I was a Motor T operator 3531 but I only did one enlistment. I deployed to Iraq and it was just everyday we just did things to prepare ourselves to go to combat if that's what it came too.

Perry: When I graduated boot camp, I found out my dad wasn't there and that shocked me. Because he was so proud that I was going into the military, especially the Marine Corps. Because he told me, I didn't tell my parents when I joined. I kind of was just like "Hey, I joined the Marine Corps." And they were like "Oh, okay great."

But he didn't show up and I was like mom where's dad and she was like "Uhh..." She pulled me to the side, right after my graduation and said, "You know, he can't make it, he has treatment tomorrow." And I was like "For what?" and she was like "Your dad has cancer." And so, I was kind of dealing with that all the way up until my deployment and I would say two months before I went, he passed away.

Perry: And then I had to do what Marines do and put that aside and get ready to go on this deployment because I was in charge of other Marines and it was something that, I kind of had to put to the side for a minute and deal with on my own but it got to be too much, and I ended up just breaking down when I went to Iraq.

Perry: I took my weapon and loaded it, sat on a chair, put my chin on it and took it off safe and I was balling my eyes out and put it back on safe, walked to work, walked to my sergeants office and I scared him, on accident. I took my weapon off and I said "Sergeant, it's nothing, I just don't feel like mentally I can have this right now." From a Marine that's a big thing. To give up your rifle that's one of the biggest things in the Marine Corps. You don't do that.

Perry: And in that one decision right there, I think I probably saved a platoon full of lives. We're up for 48 hours at a time, 72 hours at a time. Where some of us are drivers, some of us are gunners, you got to be alerted all the time, no matter how tired you are. And having that emotional trauma or whatever, and not asking for help can get people killed.

Perry: You know at that time, I'm 212, 6'1, just a big guy and here I am crumbled up in a ball on my Gunnery Sergeant's arm crying like "The only person I want to talk to is my dad, and I can't".

Perry: So, I started going two or three days a week to a psychiatrist on base. She was like, "You have severe emotional detachment." With that depression disorder or dysthymic depression, it's basically you're like a flat line. There is no real true happiness and there is no real true sadness it's just "Burrurr" and that was hard for me to hear.

Perry: Getting that help, it saved me, and it saved other people. And I'm thankful for it.

Perry: It's one of those things you can never regret because now you know it's out. There's like 150,000 pounds lifted off your shoulders and it's an amazing feeling. You feel like lighter, you feel like okay, I can breathe again. I don't feel like I'm on a respirator. I can live my life; I can stop being so anxious. I can stop freaking out about the littlest things because you're talking about what's going on with you.



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Perry: Talking to your spouse when you have an issue being a Veteran. Being in that mindset of, “Oh I’m going to hold it in, I’m a man.” “I don’t want to talk about it.” That can cause lots of problems and it did for me and wife in the very beginning.

Perry: I would tell her, “You know what, just come with me to my appointments so you can see what it’s like, so you see what I deal with.” And talking to her has helped me and our marriage a lot because now that she knows a lot of these things, she’s not as worried.

Perry: If you hold in all that stuff you dealt with from a deployment or personal trauma, tragedies, whatever have you, your life is not going to be that great. Because there aren’t too many hospitals that you can go to and talk to somebody about the stuff you can talk to people at the VA about. I mean that’s the biggest thing as a summary I can say to any Marine, any young airman, trooper, soldier, seaman, anything. Anything out there military wise. Get it, the help. It’s there. It’s just there to help us. It’s there to help all of us.



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