

Curtis' wife was the reason he reached out

Curtis: I'm Curtis. I joined the Army in 1964. I have a total 21 years plus. I'm retired from the service. I retired as a first sergeant. I did my term of Vietnam in 1967 to 1968. That's a working year of war as far as I'm concerned. After about maybe a year, that's when you realize something's really wrong and you don't want to tell nobody. I was drinking too much. I was smoking too much. I wasn't doing what I was supposed to do as a man, as a husband. Wife told me, "I'm running out on you." That's when I knew I was in really bad shape.

We're sitting up eating out one night and she says, "You know, you really need to get your stuff together or I'm going to leave you." I didn't want to fool with nobody. I used to stay in a closet for a day or so, right in the bedroom, lock the door, don't want to be bothered. I had a good doctor. He was in Vietnam that came back here, and I was going through some things and he called the VA up there in Oklahoma City. They sent me up there and I started seeing a psychiatrist, I didn't want to see a group. He said, "Man, you got posttraumatic stress." It was Monday, Wednesday, Friday when I first started off, but I was in pretty bad shape and I stayed in the group for about a year. They put me on some kind of medication that didn't work at all, it made me a little stupid, I think. Then they put me on the one I'm on now and after about, what, about 4 years and then they took me out of the therapy, and then I would go in and see a psychiatrist every 60 days. Then, if they see you improving, they move it to 90 days, they'll move you back and move you back. It's not an overnight thing.

It took months, but the release that you have knowing that somebodies actually listening, believing what you say. That's what really gets you going. I've got this man and he believes me. So you go, you make your meetings, you make your conference calls, you do what you gotta do. I'm not running from it. I'm living my life.

If a guy has been in any kind of traumatic area, he needs to get some professional help. There's help out there, but you've got to make that move. I would advise to go get help because I've been there. I see it every day at the VA clinic. Don't hide it. There's help.



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