

This statement is addressed to any combat veteran suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I hope to encourage veterans to seek a simple yet effective treatment that worked for me. I do this willingly without any special benefit or monetary gain of any kind.

I am a 60 year old Marine Corps combat veteran who served in Vietnam during the Tet Offensive of 1967-68. Like many veterans of my era, I never pursued treatment for PTSD through the VA or any private sources on my own until now.

Due to filing a claim for compensation through the VA, it has caused me to be evaluated for PTSD. As a result, I have been diagnosed with chronic type PTSD by both Dr. Martha Crotts, a private psychiatrist and James J. Ryan, MSW.

Jim explained to me that the traumatic memories from my combat experiences could never be totally erased from my memory, but he thought he could help subdue them to a level of intensity that would allow me to minimize the flashbacks and gain a more restful-nights sleep.

I decided to try a few treatments but was admittedly a bit skeptical. How could a few sessions with a social worker un-do 40 years of nightmares and flashbacks? I thought I owed it to myself to keep an open mind so I gave it a try.

Jim introduced me to a therapy called, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). The treatment went as follows:

He asked me to think of one of my most traumatic combat experiences, which involved a buddy being blown in half before my eyes. He asked that I rate the memory's intensity from one to ten, ten being the most intense. I rated it at a number 8. He then pointed the end of his finger directly at my eyes and asked that I keep my head still and follow the end of his finger with my eyes. He then moved his arm somewhat rapidly left and right. My eyes moved as though I were watching a tennis match. He did this for about 10 seconds and then asked me to close my eyes, take a deep breath and relax. After a short pause, and with my eyes still closed, he asked me to rate the intensity of the memory again. Surprisingly, I found the memory more difficult to conjure. It seemed darkened or clouded in my mind. After some effort, I told him I had to give it a rating of only a 3!

With a few additional EMDR treatments that addressed other traumatic experiences, I find I'm no longer waking up in the middle of the night scared and in a cold sweat. Since the time of treatment until now, some three months later, I find the intensities of these memories have not increased. During my waking hours I can still remember the experiences, but no longer wake up in the middle of the night scared and in a cold sweat. In my opinion, the treatment works and if hearing this testimonial can encourage other veterans to seek this type of therapy it will also help me sleep better. Semper Fi.

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