

In January of 2008, I began to experience episodes of nightmares and insomnia. I was living by myself in a very nice house that I rented in Kalispell. I was working part time and about to start school to become a teacher. I had also just received my certificate as an ordained minister and had baptized my granddaughter the month before. There was no way something could be wrong with me. But there was. By the third week in January it had been 15 days since I had not slept and when I did the vivid nightmares were tearing my mind in shreds. I had been going to the VA and thought I was talking about what was on my mind and I thought I was put on the right medications. They were pretty good folks over there. They see a lot of Veterans though and at the time I felt that nobody would understand what I was going through or what I was feeling. That I wanted my life to be over. I was so scared. Scared of the morning, the afternoon, most importantly the evening. I was scared to be around people, and I was scared to be alone. I got a marijuana joint from a friend and smoked it along with two shots of Jim Beam one night. That didn't do a thing for me. I kept going over and over in my head that if I called 911 I would simply say, "Help! I don't know what's wrong with me!". This scenario played out as well. Nobody knows the life of a Soldier...not in Kalispell. The morning after the whiskey and the joint I had an appointment at the VA with my counselor. I didn't like talking to him about my nightmares. He never made direct eye contact and in my mind like thousands of times before I had made it clear that nobody would understand what's going on in my head. As soon as I mentioned marijuana and whiskey, he called in his supervisor and they had me taken to the hospital to be tested for overdosing. Looking back, I think I would have normally been angry and just taken off. But something told me to just let it play out. From the hospital I was admitted to Pathways Rehabilitation Center which was even more ironic since I wasn't an alcoholic or a drug addict. I figured by then, they understood my dilemma and needed help and needed it badly and there wasn't much else the VA could do with the symptoms I had given them.

After I checked in and they took my vitals, got me a room, etc. I saw a psychiatrist immediately and explained everything to him. From the beginning. He listened to everything I said, looked me straight in the eye, asked me several questions and told me his immediate diagnosis was PTSD. That during my stay there I would have more testing done and be able to talk to professional counselors and that there was a Soldier there going through the same thing. I was dumbfounded. I thought I was the last person on earth with PTSD. I was too tough for that. I made it through the worst times ever and had my Lord and Savior to back me up. But as the week went on, as I got to finally say out loud to complete strangers what happened to me and my Soldiers, what I had to face, see, hear, smell and remember it was like an egg cracked open and everything ran out. Years of the yolk and egg whites. I was able to talk to professional psychiatrists and psychologists 3 times a day. I was put on Seroquel and Clonidine along with Prozac. I was not up for all of this but I told myself it wouldn't be forever.

Even though most of the people there had chemical addictions, and I felt that they were not like me, they actually WERE like me. They were hurting, they were scared, and they needed help.

David came to see me twice a day for 7 days. He looked over the place in Kalispell and then I asked him if I could move in the downstairs at his house when I got released. It was hard to ask, but the thought of ever going over to my place alone gave my heart palpitations and I had to use breathing exercises.

I never considered myself weak and helpless. But I finally admitted it. That's 100% of the battle. After I moved in with David and his kids I was feeling a lot better. I liked to help on the farm and be able to take the kids to school and pick them up. I liked to help around the house and I really enjoyed the quiet. I wasn't alone because he had so many animals. I got to go get the pigs for 4H and the baby chicks for the turn-over rate since the dogs and coyote and fox seem to get after the hens. Things were going very well for a long time. David and I actually fell in love and got married. He was my biggest supporter and my hero.

Then something happened. I didn't want to get out of bed. I didn't want to help. I mean I did, but I couldn't. I was depressed all the time. I would have days where the kids and I would have fun outside all day long. Then they wouldn't see me for two or three days. David would bring me food in bed. He suggested that I get a part time job. Which I did at the Wave. It's physically demanding and I hated it at first, but it's kept me in shape and given me energy. Then he suggested that I go to school which I had been talking about since the recession. So I started back to FVCC to become a teacher. Sometimes I would miss work and school because I just didn't want to leave the house. I would go online and try to figure out how I could live at the house and never leave again. I would wake up in the morning, have coffee, take a hot shower, get dressed and think to myself..I am going to do this today!!!! I am going into town and I am going to be productive! I am going to help my husband ~~do~~ stuff today!!! And the next thing you know, I am back in bed. I am crying...the dreams are back, I tried to go back to the VA and that didn't work. I went to two different private counselors and that didn't work. On top of all this I got a new knee and months later a partial new shoulder. This was all for trying to have fun and stay active.

I helped out with 4H, got ribbons, lots of first place. I was miserable. I was so mad at myself. I had/have everything. A wonderful husband, healthy children and step-children, good church and community relations, money in the bank. I would scream at myself, "You fucking bitch!!" And then it started with I didn't want to live again. I was worthless. Nothing was helping...I got physical therapy, I got good pain medication, and I had everything I asked for. Yet my mind was butternut squash. I couldn't control my emotions. I was so unhappy. I threatened to leave David..the negative thoughts and night terrors, the depressed moods were unbearable. He didn't understand and I felt like he didn't care. I tried to talk to my sister.

It eludes me how I managed to find Dr. Lora now....I was looking for something different. No more counseling, no more drugs, I knew I needed something to train my brain. To use more than the 10% of its full capacity to make me have happy thoughts. I knew that if I can have physical therapy on my body, I am sure there is physical therapy on my brain. After all, it's 2010! I didn't know what neurofeedback was, but I had wanted to try something different and something with my brain. I looked up neurofeedback on the internet and Dr. Lora Lonsberry's website popped up. I called her immediately and she answered her phone!!!! I was very impressed. I told her a little tiny bit about myself and that I needed help As Soon As Possible. I was in her office the next day. She was/is very beautiful, nice, professional and compassionate about her work and I was very ready to take away my emotional terrorism and ready to get started. This was in April of 2010.

She explained to me a little about Neurofeedback and what happens when she connects the electrons to my frontal lobes and then the back lobes. Alpha Theta, Alpha Theta resets and different settings over a period of 40 sessions has made significant emotional events occur in my life and has made me a stronger, healthier, happier, self-assured person than I ever EVER thought I could be.

On a scale of 1 to 7, 1 being much better and 7 being much worse, I have gone from all 7's to 1's and 2s. It's almost like being in harmony with yourself now if you are honest with your answers and the data uptake sheet or you are only cheating yourself.

I like to wake up and get out of bed...I make the bed, I make coffee, I feed all the animals and I practically cannot wait to leave the house to go to something!!!!!!

I clean the house, cook, can, sew, finish my homework on time.

When I talk to my parents or my sister I don't lie anymore and tell them I am fine, and life is great! I am honest now and let them know when something is bothering me, or when I do need money, or when I have had a rough day.....I don't cover up my feelings anymore. I don't pull any punches. I tell it like it is.

I am able to help my husband around the farm, cutting down trees for firewood, cleaning out the chicken coop, getting the hay shelter ready for more bales coming in before winter.

I am able to complete my to do lists. I am able to go to COSTCO by myself. I can communicate with myself.

I am a vessel of enlightened qualities and can accomplish whatever I set out to do. People don't hurt me anymore, I am no longer rejected. I don't feel guilty about past decisions that I have made. I go back to places in my head over and over again. I don't dwell on situations where I had hurt people or where people were hurt. It's done. It's over. I am here in the moment. Yes, I still have those days...yes I still get angry in certain situations. I am not a saint! But the days of total impatience and unforgiveness and lack of empathy and blaming myself for everything are over!

I can get through a day and know that this is the most important day of my life!

Thanks Dr. Lora!