

## *Finding His Way Home: The Story of a Soldier Returning from War*

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### **A** *wife's account of her husband's PTSD journey:*

Before Iraq, Jon was a very humorous, relaxed person. When he returned home, he was in fight or flight mode 24/7. He could not sleep well, produced angry outbursts constantly, and would explode in anger in simple situations such as a glass of water being left out on the counter.

One morning, I came into the kitchen because he was yelling about something, and I found him with his forearm against our 11-year-old son's throat up against a cabinet. Calmly, I asked him, "What was going on?"

He responded with, "I am trying to get his attention."

"We do not use force to get someone's attention," I retorted. Frustrated, he stormed out of the house.

One time a car drove past the house and it backfired. Reacting to the noise, he dove to the ground and covered his head. For the first year and a half, he displayed signs of being stuck in Iraq-military mode. One day, within a month of his arrival home, we decided to drive to Madison, WI. While approaching a bridge, he gunned our Ford Expedition reaching to 90 mph and began to zigzag on the freeway. I began to scream and asked, "What are you doing?"

Jon shook his head and could not figure out what was going on. After a few seconds, I calmly coaxed him into pulling over. He appeared to be lost, as if he did not know where he was.

Jon had issues reintegrating into society. He did not like to talk to people, and fell into a deep depression. His old life seemed like a distant memory that he could not regain. Emotionally, he could not relate to people and did not fit in. Sadly, he could not even attend his daughter's swim meets because of the gun used to indicate false starts. The avoidance of social events and strange behavior continued on for the first year and a half. Oftentimes, I told him that he was scaring the kids and me. Before the war, Jon was never a violent person. With his clown-like personality, he could make anyone laugh. He truly was a wonderful dad and husband.

After living in fear and missing his old life, he decided to begin MNRI® therapy with Peg Johnson. After three sessions with Peg, he returned almost back to normal. Unfortunately, he cannot erase the past, the terrible situations that he faced, and what he saw; but they are mere memories that have been filed on the shelf in his brain. The only residual problems left are his unease with large crowds. Jon oftentimes mutters, "We are a huge target!"

A few years ago, we moved out of state, which stalled Jon's continuance with MNRI® therapy. I strongly be-



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lieve that continuing on with the MNRI® program would have helped him beat his anxiety towards large social gatherings and events. For now, regrettably, we have learned to avoid events with large crowds.

***Peg Johnson's (Jon's MNRI® Core Specialist) account:***

I began MNRI® work with Jon after his return from Iraq in 2007. At the beginning, Jon displayed many PTSD symptoms such as depression, isolation, angry outbursts, impaired judgment, and unclear foggy thinking most of the time, that were not a part of his previous history. His wife reported that he would often stand outside in the yard for hours looking up to the sky as if he were lost.

To begin the healing process, integration of the primary sensory-motor reflex patterns – Babinski, Grounding, Foot Tendon Guard, and Core Tendon Guard – were chosen for our MNRI® recovery strategy. Initially, our focus was working with grounding, balance, and stability. Integration of the feet reflexes was essential in helping Jon feel safe after witnessing such horrific sights and sounds that come with war. After integration of these reflexes, Hands Supporting was repatterned, which provided safe postural confidence. His avoidance of new environments and isolation was behavioral evidence that this reflex pattern was retained and needed integration. Additionally, we focused on Fear Paralysis, Moro, Hands Grasp, and both Spinal Galant and Perez Reflexes, as they all were hyperactive.

After just one session, Jon displayed natural awareness of sounds and his surroundings. He attained the ability to return to a safe and healthy 'here and now experience.' His hypersensitive auditory reactions subsided significantly. Jon became more playful and confident in moving forward with life. The aggressive and odd behavior that his wife previously noted ceased and it was as if they had the 'old Jon' back. We continued to meet two more times before he moved out of state.

Dr. Svetlana Masgutova has developed a comprehensive and effective MNRI® PTSD protocol. My experience with Jon and others indicates that MNRI® is the link to positive anchors that significantly impact an individual that has experienced trauma. MNRI® focuses on the restoration and maturation of primary sensory-motor reflex patterns that provide the basis for all neurophysiological development and functioning. In times of severe stress, these reflexes become our allies and are summoned to help us survive. Yet, many chronic health issues can arise as a consequence of these automated survival responses remaining on high alert. The health and well-being of those who suffer with PTSD may continue to be compromised if reflex integration is not addressed.

Using the MNRI® model allows an individual to restore natural self-regenerating programs preventing further stress of natural systems in the body making it an effective tool for treating survivors of traumatic events. In Jon's case, MNRI® truly helped him find his way home.



*I first thank Jon for his military service and his courage to be in harms way for the greater good of all. His strength and resolve to restore what had been personally lost from his war experience made all the difference in his recovery from PTSD. It was an honor to serve and support him in this process.*  
– Peg Johnson