



Coping Strategies™

This special Multi-Media CD is the offline version of the Patriot Outreach website.

Souls Touching Souls!

Dear Colonel Monaco,

First, I want to thank you for calling me yesterday. I followed your advice and went back to the site and did the exercise. I feel so much better. I've let go of a lot of the other frustrations I have been carrying with me for a long time. This morning I woke up and started to write; what happened yesterday actually inspired a scene I added to the script. I don't mind if you forward this, I wrote this in mind to be shared.

I'll admit it, when I was given the Coping Strategies CD and visited the website, I didn't think it applied to me. I had become so used to existing on emotional stress and physical pain that I dismissed the notion that I needed to learn how to cope. I believed that I was coping with my problems well enough. After really taking a hard look at myself and actually [giving] the exercise a chance, I've come to realize that I've been holding onto all of the anger, disappointment, and sorrow from events in my past.

For the past seven years, in my mind's eye I've viewed myself in three different ways: who I was, who I wanted to be, and who I am. I have been guilty of assigning my anger and disappointment in myself to everyone around me. I couldn't take their love, support, and encouragement at face value. In my mind, I told myself that deep down they thought I was a failure and a burden. I overcompensated to the point that I really was just hurting myself instead of making things better.

After five surgeries to remove the joint, two bones, and damaged tissue in my right foot, I was diagnosed with causalgia; a disorder that developed as a result of the nerve damage from what happened to me in the Army. The best description I've read on the pain that comes with causalgia is "imagine someone replaced your blood with gasoline, set it on fire, and then kept the fire burning 24/7." In the past few months the symptoms of [the] disorder has spread to my right hand, and that frustrates me far more than my leg.

All of this brings me back to the Coping Strategies CD. At the time I finally listened; I felt so frustrated and overwhelmed. The mental strain I was putting on myself because of my physical pain was causing me to lash out at the people around me. I was angry about what happened in my past, I was frustrated by my physical limitations, so when I became upset over something minor I started cycling those negative thoughts that only served to make me feel worse.

It took someone's kind reminder of the resource I've had all along to snap me out of it. I did the exercise. Instead of focusing on my past, instead of focusing on negative thoughts, I focused on being aware. It worked, and my bad mood lifted. I was aware of the physical pain, but it wasn't at the forefront of my thoughts; this pain is not and should not be an excuse to make my life more difficult than it truly is.

Thank you and God Bless,
Amber

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