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exhaustion. Thank Goodness, my friend had learned how to bring me back into the NOW away from "wherever I was" with "whomever was damaging me."

Does this sound familiar to you?

Yes, it is the older/younger Veteran who witnessed terrors no one should have to experience. Surprisingly enough, it is also your neighbor, the sweet, elderly woman, who gardens next door every day. It is the tired garbage man, plodding away at his job. It is the harried young cashier at the mall. That quiet, middle-aged man who does not say much when you greet him. It is your cousin, son, aunt, grandfather. It is YOU!

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is not selective! I understand and empathize with the varying degrees of pain PTSD can cause in one's life. I was diagnosed with Delayed-Onset PTSD in November 2004. I fight an ongoing battle with it.

What is PTSD? Glad you asked...

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder [PTSD] is, according to The National Center for PTSD

(<http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/information/>), "...an anxiety disorder that can occur after you have been through a traumatic event. A traumatic event is something horrible and scary that you see or that happens to you." PTSD, though classified as a psychiatric disorder, is also a biological malady that affects the lower part of your brain, the Limbic System. Without getting too technical, the Limbic System is where the Flight/Fight reaction stems from.

Dr. C. George Boeree states, "It (Limbic System) appears to be primarily responsible for our emotional life, and has a lot to do with the formation of memories."

Additionally, it is where depression, anxiety, fear, and all the lower-based negative emotions come from. In essence, your Limbic System is out of control during a PTSD "episode". Heightened Alert, so to speak!

Trauma comes in many forms. PTSD can be brought on by life-threatening events; such as violent bodily harm (like rape or shootings), natural disasters (Karrina), military combat (from WWI to Iraq), as well as serious vehicular and/or other horrible accidents. Moreover, let us not forget worldwide traumas; like 9/11 or Columbine.

Most who survive trauma go through the PTSD symptoms and process them out in due time. However, there are those who "...suffer from stress from the event and the stress increases over time."

Like me! I plowed through life, got past every bad or sorrowful event that occurred, and moved forward without spending too

I would like to take this opportunity to thank, with great appreciation, Mr. Joe Livernois, our speaker at our July General Membership meeting. Mr. Livernois, the Executive Editor of the Monterey County Herald, shared with us his personal experience of coping and dealing with his father's mental illness through his memoir, *The Road to Guanajuato*. He is a true local hero in our community for having the courage and dedication to express his experience through the written word.

Respectfully, Monique Olsen-McKenzie

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

MEDICAL RESEARCH SHOWS APPROXIMATELY 8% OF MEN AND 20% OF WOMEN DEVELOP PTSD. OF THESE, APPROXIMATELY 3 OUT OF 10 PEOPLE WILL DEVELOP A LIFELONG CHRONIC PROBLEM WITH PTSD.

RECENT STATISTICS, NATIONAL CENTER FOR PTSD

IRIS THE DRAGON CHILDREN'S BOOK SERIES

Iris the Dragon Inc. publishes illustrated children's books that educates and comforts children about mental health disorders. Each book addresses a different mental health disorder told through the genre of a fairy tale and is beautifully illustrated to reflect the emotions experienced when dealing with a mental illness.

Believed to be the first of its kind in its approach to educating caregivers and children about mental illness, and in beginning a dialogue with children about what often can be a difficult topic.

Using a fairy tale character throughout the series called Iris the Dragon, each book takes children on a journey experiencing different mental illnesses and provides education to those that do not suffer and comfort and hope to those that do.

For more information:
www.iristhedragon.com

