

Delores M. Hall
23402 Wellington Court Blvd.
Spring, TX 77389

September 13, 2010

House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
335 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressmen and Committee Members:

At age 19, October 2000, my son, Carlin Sloan, entered the USMC as a new recruit. He made it through boot camp, was assigned to Camp Pendleton and began his tour of duty. He was blessed to have the absolute best training ever offered in the USMC. He trained in various arenas as well as in Okinawa. He was trained, armed, and prepared for combat. Then beginning in 2003, Carlin served two combat tours in Iraq. He completed four years of duty. Carlin was not trained to return to the civilian life that he so longed to become part of again.

What every service man or woman dreams of while on the front line is getting home. The dream is the same, "If I could just get home, I am going to be fine. I am going to do all those things I have taken for granted. I am going to live, if I can just get home." Much to our disappointment, it just did not work out that simple.

After combat, when Carlin returned to the US, he was greeted with open arms; a heroes welcome, with sincere outpouring of care from family, friends and strangers. He was physically intact; had a great support system and resources available from the VA. He took advantage of those resources, but he couldn't get fixed; he could not feel normal.

Each time Carlin sat in therapy with his combat brothers and sisters, he cringed. He could not stand to play his own war story in his head much less be in a room of broken veterans telling their horrific stories. The medications prescribed, dulled his senses and at times had adverse effects on him. He just existed. He had no hope and the anxiety he felt revved it ugly head throughout every day he tried to make ordinary or normal. His dream of being home now turned to a dream of wanting to feel normal. What did that feel like?

He had nightmares that sent him into such hysterical states. I recall one night when he was shaken awake by his roommate who found him on the floor of his bedroom after a nightmare which caused him to lunge into the wall gashing his head into the corner of a picture frame. Blood ran from his forehead and his lifelong civilian friend was terrified as well.

Carlin couldn't sleep and could not function in the daytime either. He was depressed and at times thought of suicide. He used alcohol to cope which only created more problems for him.

Many times Carlin considered re-enlisting as an answer. He knew he could do that. He would have camaraderie and could relate to his brothers. It was the only thing he thought he could do. He could not keep a civilian job, but he could be a Marine. Those are the thoughts and mantras that run through the minds of those who live in a world of fear, anxiety, depression, worthlessness, and confusion. How did this happen? He is a Marine! What was PTSD?

In 2008, three and one half years after Carlin's honorable discharge from the USMC, he was more unstable than ever. I contacted Carlin and asked him if he would be willing to participate in a pilot program for helping veterans with PTSD. He said, yes. He would be willing to try anything.

That very night, Carlin spoke with Gary Craig, the founder of Emotional Freedom Technique. Gary invited Carlin and me to travel from Houston to San Francisco for a week long therapy session to learn EFT, a tapping technique. Gary said he would pay for all expenses. We said yes. What did we have to lose?

We arrived at the hotel in San Francisco and attended the opening night. Carlin was petrified. What was he thinking to put himself out like this? There were too many people, he was sweating, and there were too many lights and combat veterans crazier than he was. Carlin didn't want to go through the process. We returned to our hotel room and talked. Quite frankly I was also rattled.

We pulled ourselves together and with much anxiety, proceeded into the next day's therapy. We met in the meeting room, and received our schedule. It was a busy and emotional day. Carlin and I crossed paths at meals and talked of our sessions which were held mostly separate.

The questions asked by therapists under usual therapy sessions would have been too emotionally difficult to answer. The practitioners were very professional, compassionate but most of all the tapping technique was working. How weird was that? Tapping relieved anxiety, fears, and Carlin's tremors. This tapping thing was amazing. Not only for Carlin and me, but for the other skeptical veterans we met the first night.

The sessions were emotionally draining, but Carlin felt safe and free to share his experiences and feelings. He felt safe for the first time in a very long time. He felt hope. Carlin felt he was moving into a life that every veteran longs for. Normal.

At then end of the week long EFT therapy, the original group of veterans, and their family members gathered. Who were these people and what happened to the crazy people we had met five days earlier? These people were glowing with joy. They were happy, hopeful and so excited to share this new technique with others. Through tear

streaked cheeks, the most skeptical veteran of all shared his feelings of joy and his desire to live for the first time in thirty years. We too were all moved to tears.

Over the past two and a half years, Carlin has used EFT and has contributed to helping other veterans move out of despair into a life of freedom. Carlin was gifted with a lifelong tool that has given him life back. I wish every veteran could have the same opportunity for healing themselves and their families.

I most strongly recommend EFT for all veterans suffering from PTSD. I am forever grateful.

Yours truly,

Delores M. Hall