

A Caring Wife standing by her "New Man".

The NEW Man I Live With

My husband and I met during high school and married 3 years later (I was 19, he was 22). About two years later, after the attacks on the WTC & Pentagon on Sept 11, 2001, my husband joined the Army. I respected and honored his decision. I was intensely proud that he was willing to step up – to defend his country – to willingly go to war to protect his homeland.

The man I was married to in 2001 was kind, sweet, and unbelievably tender. Random strangers would stop us in grocery stores and parks to tell us how incredibly “in love” we looked. They told me how blessed I was to be married to a man that so obviously adored me. I didn’t realize at the time how right they were.

Fast forward seven years. My husband has spent a little over 27 months in Iraq, both tours in “hot spots” as part of an Infantry unit. He has spent days & months on end surrounded by bad guys, trying to determine who was friend and who was foe, doing his best to keep himself and the guys around him alive. His unit stopped taking count of bodies at 684 – just about 3 months into their last tour of 12 months. My husband was raised in the woods, can shoot accurately at several hundred feet, and thus played a large part as the “go to” guy in his unit for “touchy” situations. My husband turned into an excellent soldier at the same time he turned into a pretty bad husband.

I’m no shrinking violet. I rose to the occasion as a military wife. Acted as FRG leader, conducted fundraising campaigns, didn’t complain about deployments, training, or other military activities that called my husband away. And really, now, I don’t mean to sound like I’m ranting about what “the military” did to our family. I’m still incredibly proud of my husband’s service and intensely patriotic – I was just so completely unprepared for the aftermath of OIF.

I now live with a new husband. He looks the same (or pretty much the same) but now seldom touches me, stands and stares at me if I cry, flies off the handle at the smallest unwelcome surprise, curses at me, screams, throws things, etc., etc. If it weren’t so scary and sad, I would say he reminds me of an out-of-control three year old – kicking and screaming because he can’t process the world around him. I’m not sure why I wanted to add this to the “VW Views” – but I guess it’s to say to anyone out there who is now living with a NEW husband that you’re not alone. I was feeling so very alone until I called the VWV and talked to Danna. In the space of an hour on the phone, she let me know I wasn’t alone because thousands of other women are going through and have gone through the same thing with husbands who are suffering from PTSD. There’s a strength that comes from not feeling like the “only one” – a strength that I’m thankful to have – a strength I need to get through the coming days as our family tries to cope and learn to live again – a strength I hope to share with any of you who need it.

Thanks for listening,

Still Standing Beside My “New” Man