

December 18, 2013

Dear friend,

I want to share with you how a MAPS-funded study transformed my life.

I was a paratrooper in the United States Army and served in an airborne reconnaissance unit out of Fort Richardson, Alaska. I, like many others, upheld my oath and served my country honorably by going to war. I deployed to Iraq during the surge at 19 years old. I came back 14 short months later no longer innocent or young.

I was lost, and didn't know it. I was on medications, and went from seeking help to seeking more meds, until I became addicted. I was unconsciously living a life of denial and hate, coping with pills, trying to numb the pain, but truly numbing my soul. I saw no point in life anymore. I was diagnosed with PTSD. I tried all kinds of therapy through the Veterans Administration. They tried to help, but the treatment didn't work. I was on so many meds, I don't really remember the details of my life—only that it was a dark time.

Then I heard about MAPS' MDMA-assisted psychotherapy study through an internet search. I decided to apply and they accepted me. During the therapy I let my guard down for the first time since I returned. I had no fear. I was relaxed and comfortable. My inner wisdom that guided me through the process didn't let me ignore the past, but I just didn't have the judgments in my head.

Trust me: I had significant fears and misconceptions entering the session. I was a distant observer of my own dark life. But after the MDMA took effect, my soul sparked back to life. I felt connected to a vibrant life force, and I awakened to a childlike curiosity and inner power. During therapy, I understood I was my own enemy. I learned that I shape my reality and control my destiny with how I perceive and how I act. Now I feel that true strength is facing your weaknesses and fears, and moving on from there.

Since the therapy, I feel settled back home and out of the war. I am reconnected with myself. I appreciate my family, my friends. My mood and outlook is generally relaxed and positive. I don't take meds anymore. I am not perfect, but I have learned a lot about myself. I can go out in public, have a life. If something gets the fear going, I can see it as something I can learn from.

In the military we didn't express feelings—we just went out and fought. We didn't have time to be weak when our brothers' lives were on the line. We learned that fear is normal and paranoid behaviors would save our lives. This thinking, along with the war-like atmosphere, taught us behaviors that work in wartime, but it left me with a constant overdrive mentality and a fear of my own self. That all changed with one therapy session.

I know that an average of 22 of my fellow soldiers die by suicide every single day. That is truly hard to understand. I feel extremely hurt that we as a country are not doing absolutely everything we can to solve this problem.

One thing I learned from the military that I hold true is that you never leave a fallen soldier behind—in war or back home. I will never give up on helping my fellow brothers and sisters-in-arms get the treatment they deserve. That's why I'm helping raise money for this study.

MDMA-assisted psychotherapy worked for me, and looking at the data, I see it can work for other people as well. We need evidence-based research to have the medicines we need. By adding this tool, we can help a lot of people—substantially. The sooner the research is finished, the sooner we can help more people.

Thank you for taking the time to read my story. It is one of the best things for me as a person, and as a veteran, to express myself and have people listen. The only thing better would be to know that others can benefit like I did. With your support, that can happen.

Thank you,



Tony Macie

P.S. To see me, and another study participant talk about our experience, you can watch a video on Indiegogo at maps.org/healingtrauma. I'm working together with Rachel Hope, who had PTSD from non-combat traumatic events, to make sure these studies succeed so others like us can get help. **You can make a donation until December 31 on Indiegogo or always at maps.org/donate.**

Thank you for reading this letter from a study participant. If you are able, please consider making a year-end gift for MDMA/PTSD research. We are about two-thirds of our way to our goal of \$1.4 million for our key study with veterans—and we're making progress in our discussions with the VA about a collaborative study. Your gift, of any amount, will help us develop MDMA-assisted psychotherapy into a prescription treatment.

