

Powerful Patient 2008 week 46

Host: Joyce Graff, WebTalkRadio.net

After the Battle – Post-Traumatic Stress

J. T. Caldwell talks with Joyce about how we can best support those who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan and other wars to integrate back into life in America. A Viet Nam veteran who had PTSD himself, he has written a novel about that experience.



J. T. Caldwell

1) About Our Guest

JT Caldwell was born in Ashland, Kentucky, in 1945, into the home of a very conservative Southern Baptist preacher. His father founded a number of congregations and then moved along to found another, with the result that his children changed schools at least once a year.

It was in high school that he decided to be a singer and conductor, so he attended the University of Michigan where he earned both undergraduate and masters degrees in vocal performance. As he was finishing his graduate degree, he signed a contract to teach at the University of Dubuque, Iowa.

When he graduated in May, 1969, his hopes and plans were all coming true: he had married his high school sweetheart, had his first teaching job, and had successfully staved off the Draft—or so he thought. The arrival of his draft notice in August upended everything. When he was sent to Vietnam to serve as a chaplain's assistant, he had no idea of the extent of the changes the war would bring about in his life.

His book, *The Chaplain's Assistant*, is a fictional account of the experiences that changed his life, and his own path to recovery. See <http://thechaplainsassistant.com>

2) About Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is 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. During this type of event, you think that your life or others' lives are in danger. You may feel afraid or feel that you have no control over what is happening.

Anyone who has gone through a life-threatening event can develop PTSD. These events can include:

- Combat or military exposure
- Child sexual or physical abuse

- Terrorist attacks
- Sexual or physical assault
- Serious accidents, such as a car wreck.
- Natural disasters, such as a fire, tornado, hurricane, flood, or earthquake.

After the event, you may feel scared, confused, or angry. If these feelings don't go away or they get worse, you may have PTSD. These symptoms may disrupt your life, making it hard to continue with your daily activities.

It is important to get help as soon after the event as possible, to work through these very normal reactions and get back on track. It is not a sign of weakness to ask for help, it is a sign of good common sense and caring for yourself and those around you.

For additional information and resources, see
<http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/ptsd/alert.asp>

3) Supporting our Troops and their Families

Helping to support the families of soldiers on duty abroad
<http://www.operationhomefront.net/>

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans' Association
<http://iava.org/>

Resources for Veterans
<http://www.iava.org/resources-for-vets>