

# IGNITE

FIRST RESPONDERS LIFE GUIDE  
FEBRUARY 2023 / ISSUE NO. 14

WHEN TRAUMA ISN'T  
RECOGNIZED, FOOTPRINTS  
BEHIND THE BROKEN

LIFE AND EXPERIENCE IN  
THE FIRE SERVICE

ONE REASON WHY  
EVERY HUSBAND  
AND WIFE SHOULD  
EXERCISE TOGETHER

UNITING FIRST RESPONDER FAMILIES

**YOU MATTER!**

# IGNITE Magazine

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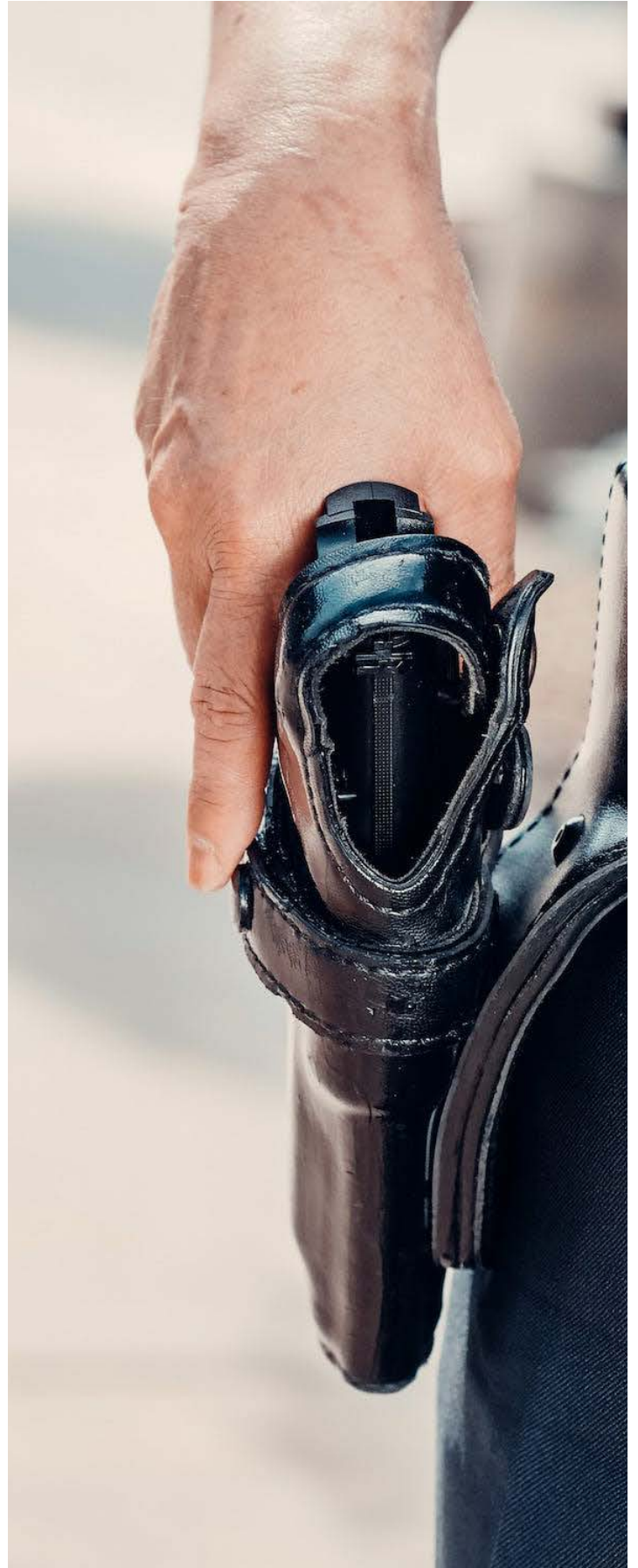
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# IGNITE MAGAZINE

Lorie Gurnett - Creator & Editor

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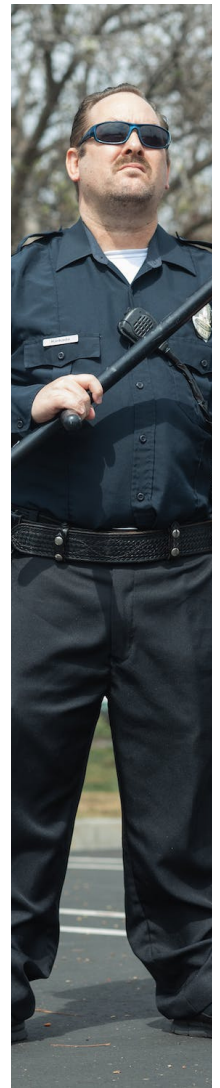
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*“We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.”*

*~ Romans 15: 1-2 ~*



*Tina Morlock*

Tina Morlock is a published self-help and fiction author and a poet who works as a freelance book editor and ghostwriter. She lives in Oklahoma City with her family, where she loves to write young adult thrillers and play pinball in her spare time.

She started writing about therapeutic creativity after I experienced an emotionally abusive relationship with a past romantic partner, which led me to writing and publishing, *Red Flag Conversations*. It took all the therapeutic writing I'd done since I was a teenager and labeled it with a purpose.



*Jamie Wilkinson*

Jamie Wilkinson, was the Chief Fire Officer for the City of Wetaskiwin, he had been a fire service member for 27 years. His dream as a child was to become a firefighter and help those in need and to serve his community. He had the fortune of learning these values at a young age, and its these same values that he will pass on to his children.



*Dr. Eric Tangumonkem*

Dr. Eric Tangumonkem was born and raised in a Caldera on the Cameroon Volcanic Line in Cameroon West Africa. He has a Bachelor's degree in Geology and a minor in Sociology from the University of Buea in Cameroon, a Masters in Earth Sciences from the University of Yaounde in Cameroon, and a Doctorate in Geosciences from the University of Texas at Dallas. In addition to being a geoscientist with extensive experience in the oil and gas industry, he is a teacher and an entrepreneur.

# WHAT BRINGS YOU JOY?

## Editor's Inspirational

When you are surrounded with so much darkness both inside and out, how do you find the motivation to keep moving forward? Life is never short of its challenges, as I am sure you will agree. When you get slammed with such heart wrenching pain, emotionally or physically, what brings you joy?

I was in this dark place entering into 2023. I was not sleeping much and my grief was exponential. But I chose to find something to bring me joy each day. Sometimes it was just the joy of having a coffee in the morning and spending some quiet time in prayer. Other times it was a purring kitten snuggling up to me, and still other times it was a smile from a stranger.



A long time ago I was told a story about a young man who always would wave to people and smile, even if he did not know them. His girl friend asked him why he did that. He gave her a gentle hug and smiled. "If a smile and wave

from a stranger remind them that they are seen, just maybe my smile can save a life today." This stuck with me over the years and I have been on both the receiving of a smile and the giver of one. Believe me, I have been saved by a stranger's smile.

Let me explain, In my darkest moments, I was on the point of suicide and I thought I was the ugliest and worst person in the world. I felt that if my own family who raised me didn't like me then who else could? I always felt that I was never good enough and that a worthless dirty rag had more value than me.

Have you ever struggled with these emotions? I am sure I am not the only person who has felt this struggle.

I am here to tell you that you are God's workmanship, and God has a plan for you. You do have value, no matter what anyone else thinks. These are some truths I have to embrace on a daily basis. In the words of Alfred, Batman's butler, "why do we fall down? It is so we can learn to get back up again."

There is hope no matter the darkness that is weighing you down, If you need encouragement in this area, I welcome you to reach out to me. You matter and you are worth fighting for!

By: Lorie Gurnett

# When Trauma Isn't Recognized, Footprints Behind the Broken

Everyone we meet out in the world experiences trauma on some level – family members, friends, and the people out in your community. But, when trauma isn't recognized or addressed in the most critical moments, it can often leave footprints behind in the most heartbreaking ways.

I am not a doctor or a therapist, but I've experienced more trauma than I'd care to admit to seeing in my life, both in childhood and adulthood. Here is the most powerful thing I've learned over the years in all those experiences:

It's not misery that loves company – it's trauma that loves company.



When I experienced trauma as a child, I didn't have the support I needed to wear that survivor badge, and the pain somehow merged into my budding personality. I was shy, stayed in the metaphorical shadows, and tried to stay out of the limelight as much as possible. It informed the woman I turned into later, which made it incredibly hard to determine who was speaking – the angry, young girl who felt left behind or the strong woman who wanted a better life.

That angry, young girl seemed to take the wheel more often than not, so I didn't always understand if she was driving me into the right or wrong choices that would lead to suffering through even more trauma later.

## Reminder

You are under no obligation to forgive your abuser—and if you do, that doesn't mean that what they did to you was okay . . .

*but please forgive yourself!*



Red flags weren't red flags; they were opportunities to connect with other like-minded people.

And, boy, did that lead me into some dark places!

*“The best way out  
is always through.”*

*~ Robert Frost ~*

Somewhere along the way, though, I finally found writing. Writing became the friend I could tell all my secrets, confessions, and fears to without the threat of getting bullied, judged, or rejected. And here is a quick trip through some of things I've learned over the years with therapeutic writing:

1. It's okay to write ugly, bad, or cringe-worthy poetry, stories, or essays. It's not about the end result – it's about the journey. And this lesson is also true about life in general. Every second you have alive is only that . . . one brief second, and it's gone. Find those little moments to focus on that make the journey worthwhile.
2. Scream in your journal. Cry in your poetry. Emotionally vomit all over the page. Toxic and traumatic experiences need to be released from your mind so you don't let that heavy weight push you underneath the surface. Isn't it about time you let yourself start breathing the fresh air you've been gasping to find?
3. Write letters to people who have hurt you beyond forgiveness but keep in mind that these letters are only for you, not for the other person. They don't need nor do they deserve an all-access pass to your heart. You don't even have to



save them if you don't want — tear them up and throw them away to represent the act of erasing them from your mind. When someone hurts you, it can often make you feel invisible, but the only person who needs to see you as a strong, beautiful survivor is you. Let the angry, hurt persona free for an hour to quiet their pain. It's extremely cathartic.

4. Forgiveness is important — for you and you only. You are under no obligation to forgive anyone responsible for traumatizing you. However, you are responsible for letting yourself off the hook so you can open your heart to hope and new experiences that lead you to a healthier life.
5. Write something down every day, even if it is only one sentence. You can write on your phone, on an old



receipt, or on a blog if you want to share your thoughts with the world. If you need some inspiration, start with a motivational quote you saw that day or something empowering a friend or co-worker told you.

6. You don't have to share what you write with others, but if you





are struggling with your trauma experience, I urge you to reach out to a therapist who specializes in working with traumatized patients. This is extremely important.

At the beginning of this article, I said: Everyone we meet out in the world experiences trauma on some level. There is one person I didn't mention in that list: the person who traumatized you. I don't say this to get you to feel sorry for them, but it is important to recognize that unacknowledged trauma creates a cycle of traumatic experiences that can reach for miles, years, and generations.

While writing out your experiences with trauma won't "cure" you or suddenly make you feel completely healed, it will help shine a light on a new direction to take in your life, one that's full of



empowerment, hope, joy, and emotional treasures beyond what you can imagine. If you're standing in the darkness today, take heart that you won't always be in the dark. Slowly but surely, the light will drown out that darkness, and you will feel much freer than you do today.

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**THERE IS HOPE EVEN  
AFTER THE FALL!**

**Do you struggle with accepting  
who you are? Need to talk to  
someone who understands?**

**Sign up today for a 30  
minute free consultation with  
Lorie Gurnett!**

Eagle Reflections  
Graphic Designer



Trauma does not have to be fought alone, ignite  
your ambition, find your purpose.

You are worth fighting for!

<https://www.authorloriegurnett.com/coachingandprograms>

# Life and Experience in the Fire Service

By Jamie Wilkinson

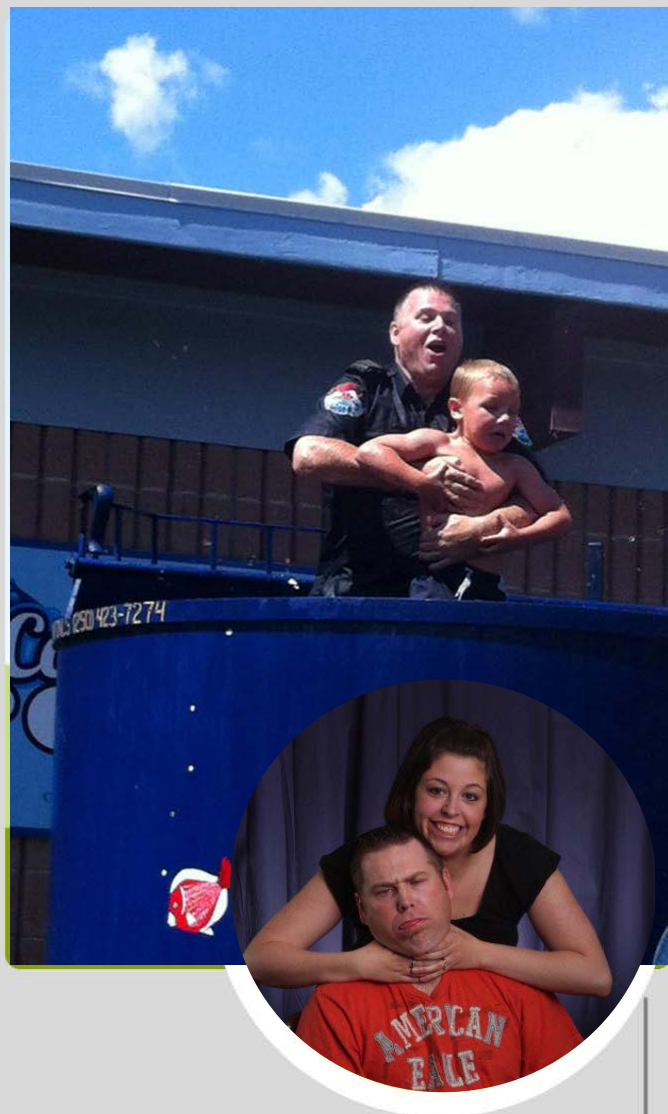
First off, do I regret my time and experience? Absolutely not.....

Being a First Responder changed the person that I am today, good and bad. Let's talk about the good of the job.

Being a First Responder felt like a life long calling, knowing inside that you possess the skills, training, knowledge and more importantly the trust of your team and community to do an already dangerous job. Being part of a team that worked together to save a life, a property, and even the little things to us that mean the world to others...like saving a cat from a tree. Being involved in the community and knowing that you are a role model for others.



Many people looked up to our occupation and young children wanted to be like us when they grew up, it's a wonderful and meaningful experience. Through my career I have made many life long friends throughout the service, even though



time and distance separates us, we still find a way to connect. These are things of the job I wouldn't change, and the things that I truly miss. And I'll get to that soon enough.



Now the bad.....I would love to sugar coat this, but I personally feel that would be an injustice. I have spent 27 years in the fire service from different aspects of the job. Industrial Firefighting, Wildland Firefighting, and Municipal Firefighting. I have had the privilege to travel and experience many different things, and fill all the positions from Rookie to Chief but not without a cost. As I write this article, I am sitting in a different atmosphere, 2022 was my career ender, not for something that I did, rather for something that I didn't do. I neglected myself mentally which compounded to the point of a mental breakdown, unsure

If there is ever a time in your life that you know "This is what I want to do for the rest of my life", then my suggestion is, Go for it!! You will become a member of one of the largest families you have ever seen, will you always see eye to eye? Not a chance. Will you trust the person standing beside you with your life? You more than likely will, and they will trust you.

"Through my career I have made many life long friends throughout the service, even though time and distance separates us, we still find a way to connect."

For folks reading this who don't quite understand what life is like in the service, if your spouse is a First Responder, well, you just adopted a whole family. These new family members may have the opportunity to spend more time with your better half than you will, and that's part of our First Responder life.



of my abilities to lead a team into those dangerous situations, to self isolation from everyone and everything I love.

I was away from my team and the station and my position for 12 months. During those months, I was seeking therapy

to combat the demons that haunted dreams when I tried to sleep. Became a person who now takes medication to keep the hamster in the wheel. My advice to all of you out there, if you want this demanding career you need to be self aware and not be afraid to speak out or ask for assistance. Contrary to belief, we are not superheroes, we actually bleed

Jamie Wilkinson

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*“If you want this demanding career you need to be self aware and not be afraid to speak out or ask for assistance”  
~ Jamie Wilkinson ~*



## THE BADGE

It is polished and shiny and looks so fine  
Once you earn it, you have to tow the line.  
The minute you wear it upon your chest  
it becomes a symbol that you are the best.

It means honesty, integrity and fairness to all.  
Your life is never your own, but at the public's call.  
This or day, any hour, it makes you a mark.  
It doesn't protect you from a shot in the dark.

Over the years the shine starts to fade,  
but brighter still is the person it's made.  
It is often what separates you from the crowd  
it is a second family of which you are proud.

~ Author Unknown ~



## One Reason Why Every Husband and Wife Should Exercise Together

By: Dr. Eric Tangumonkem PHD

After more than eleven years of trying and failing many times, we finally mastered one thing, having a positive impact on our marriage. This one thing has enhanced our marriage in many ways, and I hope your own marriage will benefit tremendously from it. Most books, blogs, podcasts, and teachings on marriage focus on communication, sex, and money. These are three legs on which each successful marriage is exhorted to stand on. We are told that if these three things are in synergy, your marriage will be divorce-proof and you will have a blissful matrimonial life.

There is nothing wrong with having a lot of money, communicating effectively, and enjoying great sex. However, there is a crucial ingredient that is missing in this picture. The elephant in the room is the foundation the marriage is standing on. These three critical legs of marriage, communication, money, and sex must stand on a firm foundation. Without this firm foundation that marriage will suffer and may eventually fail. This solid foundation is good health. Without good health all the money in the world will mean nothing. It will be difficult to have sex and communication may even be impossible in some cases. The impact of poor health on any marriage can be devastating. That's why every couple should put in the time and energy that is needed to maintain good health.

I am not a health expert, however, after more than a decade of exercising five days a week with my wife, I can attest that it is the best thing that ever happened to our marriage. The benefits are tremendous, and we strongly encourage every couple to exercise together. When you exercise together it will improve your communication, sex life, and make you rich. Our society is plagued with lifestyle diseases, such as hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, colon cancer, just to name a few. Part of the solution to these diseases and many health challenges such as anxiety, addictions, panic attacks, depression, poor balance, stress, low self-esteem etc., can be mitigated through regular exercise.



If you were told that there was a pill on the market with the potential of guaranteeing a happy and lasting marriage, wouldn't you buy it? Not only will this pill divorce-proof your marriage, but it will keep your love for one another strong, exciting, and thrilling. In short,

you will not get tired of remaining in a monogamous relationship with one partner for life.

The choice to talk about sex, money, and communication is deliberate, and it is not an attempt to lose sight of what we are trying to accomplish. This pill is exercise, and its cost is about thirty to forty-five minutes of your time, five times a week.



Can you afford thirty to forty-five minutes, five times a week, to dramatically and fundamentally transform your marriage? Asking for that short amount of time is not asking for take a few minutes and think carefully. You may be wondering how something as insignificant as exercise can have such a significant impact on any marriage's health.

Many people pay lip service to the fact that their marriage is their top





priority, but their actions, money, time, and resources are disproportionately distributed. How can a couple with twenty four hours a day find it difficult or even impossible to create time to exercise together as a couple? Talk is cheap but talk that is followed by action is what makes a difference. The potential in being able to act on your convictions is huge and must be encouraged.

Exercise has the potential to revolutionize your marriage and set it apart. You will move from the ordinary to extraordinary and from good to great. Initially, things will look awkward and challenging, but they will eventually fall into place as you keep learning and growing.

The issues of weight gain, unhealthy eating, and lack of exercise are sensitive and extremely challenging for most couples to discuss. The reason being that most of those who need the exercise are defensive and resort to angry outbursts and insist on remaining set in their ways. Each time the subject is brought up, they sabotage it by insisting that they do not eat a lot, or that it is how they were brought up. At times, they rebuke you for trying to change them and tell you not to try to do so.

It is essential to apply patience and get to the root of the problem because there is no other option. You cannot afford the cost of not doing anything and continuing on the

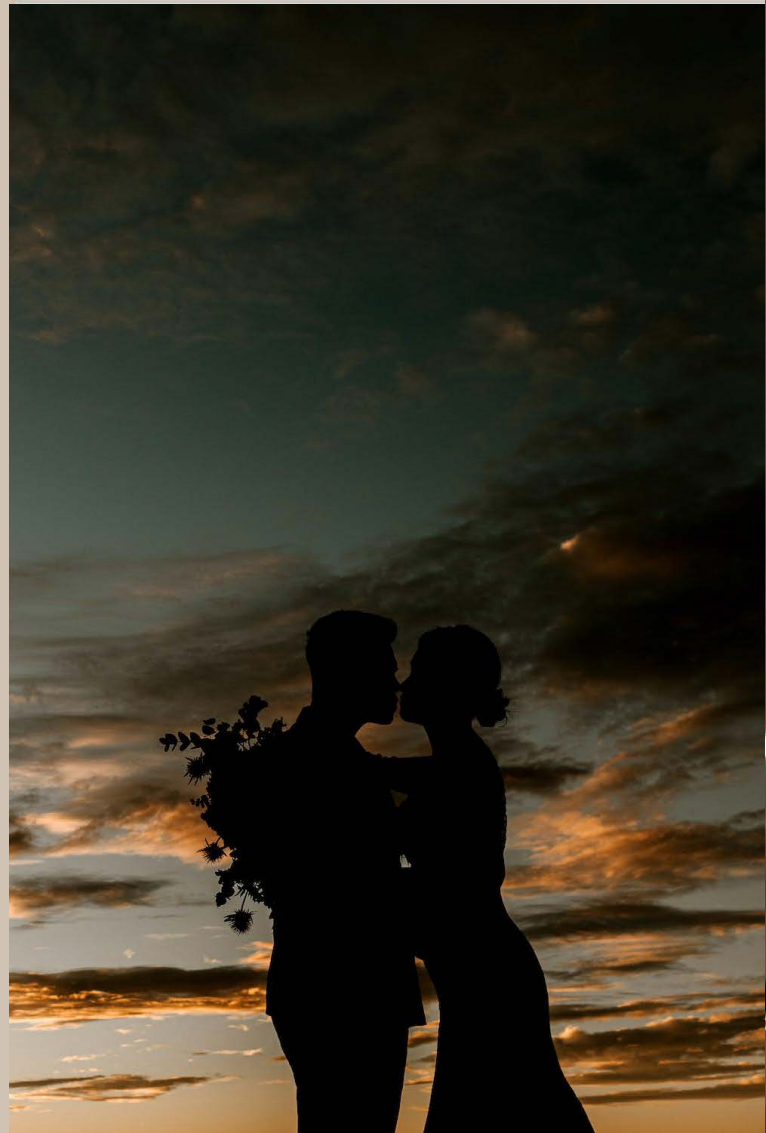


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path you are currently on. We all know what the outcome will be, and it is not good.

You and your spouse must sit down and get to the heart of the matter. If you are the person who is health-conscious and doing everything right, you should not allow fear to prevent you from doing what is best for your husband or wife and your marriage. True love drives away all fear. In addition to driving away fear, true love suffers long. You will have to soften your tone and educate your husband or wife, who is struggling to eat healthily and exercise regularly.

By: Dr. Eric Tangumonkem PHD



IN HONOUR OF OUR FALLEN HEROES



Michael Sugrue  
Deputy Sheriff Darnell Calhoun  
Chief of police Justin McIntire  
Deputy Sheriff Isaiah Cordero  
Corporal Ray Charles Hamilton  
Sergeant Donald Scoby  
Police Officer Branden Paul Estorffe

HEROES

“Hard times don’t crest heroes. It is during the hard time when the ‘hero’ within us is revealed”

~ Bod Riley ~