

# IGNITE

THE FIRST RESPONDER'S LIFE GUIDE  
AUGUST 2022 / ISSUE NO.8

YOUR MOST VALUABLE  
POSSESSION

HOW TO RESPOND  
FOR A HEALTHY  
MARRIAGE

I WISH MY MIND  
COULD FORGET  
WHAT MY EYES  
HAVE SEEN

WALKING IN THE  
SHOES OF A FIRST  
RESPONDER

UNITING FIRST RESPONDER FAMILIES

# YOU MATTER!



# IGNITE MAGAZINE

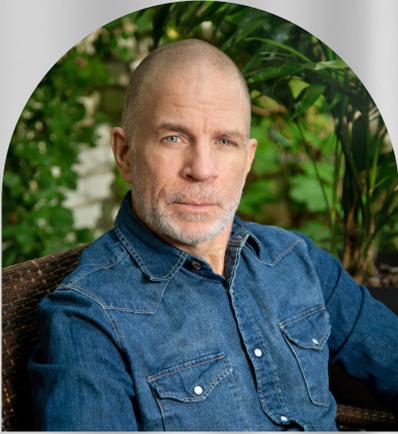
Lorie Gurnett – Creator & Editor  
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**"But you, take courage! Do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded."  
- 2 Chron. 15:7**



Martyn Wood

For decades, Martyn used his prophetic gift within the church walls, but it wasn't until 2015 that God called him to use his gifts to help entrepreneurs. Today, Martyn coaches small business owners one-on-one and through Master's Mind group sessions. Martyn lives in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada with his wife, Jennifer.

You can reach Martyn at [mastersmindnetwork.com](http://mastersmindnetwork.com) or subscribe to Master's Mind Podcast on Spotify, iTunes, Stitcher.



Daniel Dansun

Daniel Sundahl (DanSun) is a published artist and writer and has produced three art books of his works. His art is recognized worldwide, and he travels internationally, speaking about art and his personal experience with occupational stress injuries and post-traumatic growth. He is an advanced care paramedic, pre-hospital educator, retired firefighter, photographer, and photo editor.



Patrick Bock

Patrick Bock has been a paid-on-call firefighter for about 20 years and has crossed three different provinces in his career. Patrick loves spending time with family, and his grandchildren are a big part of his life. He works full time as a facility operator at a recreation center. He has seen trauma and guilt many times through his career, has experienced it first hand, and now is learning to help others through it.



Tami Myer

Tami Myer is an enthusiastic cheerleader for marriages! As a speaker and writer, Tami encourages husbands and wives that God is for them and that they can experience the thriving God offers them.

Tami encourages couples at her website [MannaForMarriage](#), and she leads husbands and wives to "fight on their knees" for their marriages through a weekly online prayer phone call. She is the author of *Radiance: Secrets to Thriving in Marriage*, *Devoted: Pressing In to Know Christ More*, and *Simple Celebrations: Practical Ways to Enjoy the Biblical Feasts*.

# FINDING THE BALANCE

## Editor's Inspirational

Have you ever felt overwhelmed or bombarded by the weight of responsibilities? Like you are juggling each new task and praying that you don't drop the ball? How do you find your balance? First of all, you need to take time to reset your body and thoughts. No one can balance life when they are exhausted and running on empty.

We all need moments of recovery. Take a cold shower, run cold water over your wrists, go for a walk, take a nap, or maybe read a book. It may look different for each person, but we all need that balance of focus and rest.

I find that when I get overwhelmed, my life starts spinning into chaos. My mind starts running out of control, thinking of anything but the tasks at hand. In times like these, take a few minutes of recharge, this will refocus your mind and refresh your body. Creating this balance, will give both your body and mind time to recover and become stronger. You cannot have balance if you don't take time for yourself.

When your mind and body are balanced as one, you have a better chance of completing and prioritizing life's challenges and daily task at a greater strength than you ever thought possible. You and the people in your life will be all the better for the self-care you give on a daily basis.

"For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."

- 2 Timothy 1:7

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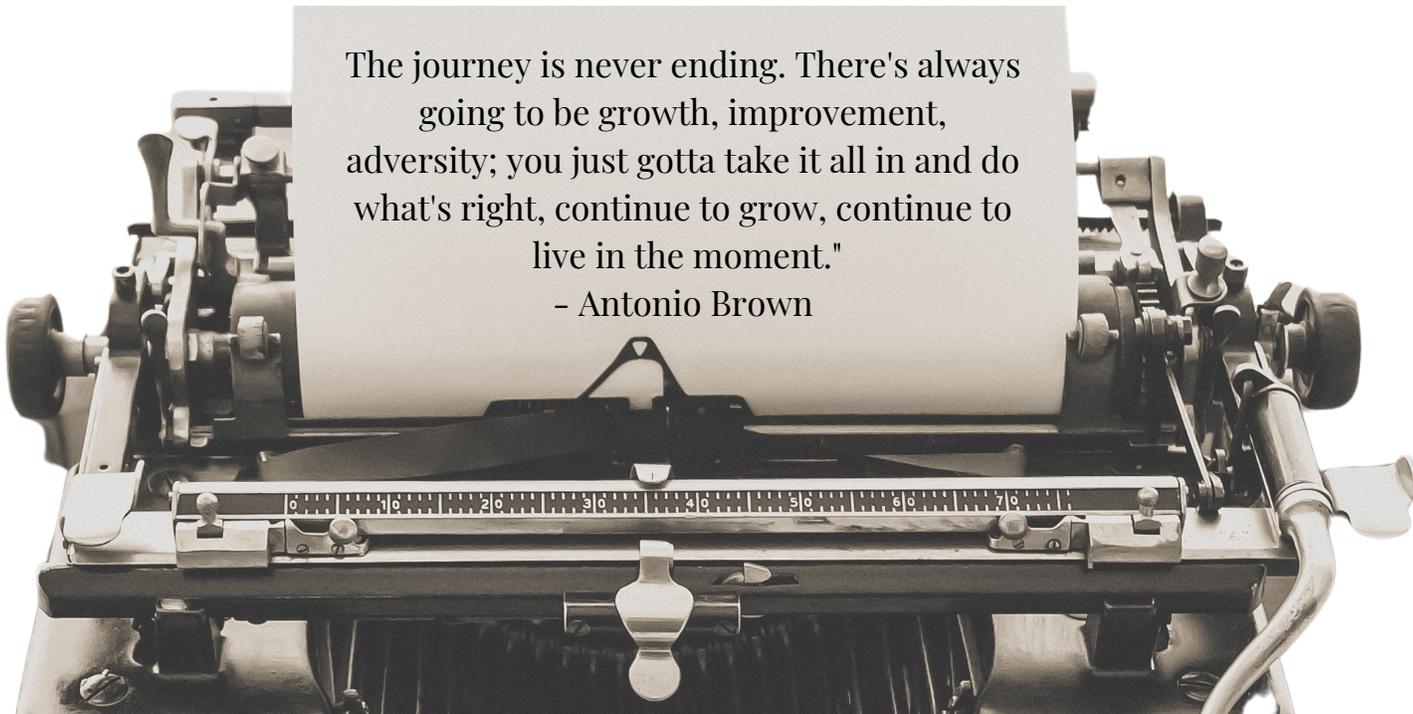
# YOUR MOST VALUABLE POSSESSION

**BY: Martyn Wood**

Identity theft continues to rise and, sadly, as we get more advanced, so too are ways to steal your God-given heritage. I find it curious that we each have a one-of-a-kind fingerprint that is used as one of the chief points of identity. However, it is not the only way of determining your identity. There is your name, your nationality, health card number, sin number, and of course, driver's license. These are some of the more usual ones. But do you know there are also many other less visible traits? I am referring to characteristics that truly set you apart and mark you as uniquely you.

Now to some, these are the





The journey is never ending. There's always going to be growth, improvement, adversity; you just gotta take it all in and do what's right, continue to grow, continue to live in the moment."

- Antonio Brown

very things we try to hide because it may not be the most desirable part of you, but for whatever reason, it is also a part of who you are. For instance, are you a peacekeeper, or do you lean more toward peace making? Believe it or not, they are different, yet both are required, especially in this chaotic world we find ourselves. Are you known for your empathy or for your sympathy? Do people run toward you as a safe refuge or run-away seeking shelter in another person or place?

Yet the one I want to zero in on and spend a little time speaking about is how you respond to adversity. Do you know that for those who walk in and by faith in Jesus, this entitles us to some pretty amazing promises? One of my favorites is found in the Old Testament. These are words the God of Israel shared with them, and the best part, the same God who shared this promise back then is the One who is backing His promise in our very present day. Isaiah 43: 2 "*When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go*

*through rivers of difficulty you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you.*" Fire and flood: among others, are two possible scenarios that are very familiar to you as first responders. Even though this was written such a long time ago, the threat and possible fear that arises as you picture images of disaster and calamity, regardless of how specific, whether it is literal fire or flood, wherever you find yourself, because of your identity as His, you are not alone. Lastly, guard your heart, your mind, and your peace. Each has been a unique and special gift given by Father for you to treasure, and the enemy would want nothing more than to steal any or all these treasures.

When was the last time you spent time thinking about the fact that, whether you are conscious of it or not, you reflect the creator who formed you? And if I may go a little further, when they see the reflection, are you giving a true representation of not



**“Cherish your visions and your dreams as they are the children of your soul; the blueprints of your ultimate achievements.”**

**Napoleon Hill**

"When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression you will not be burned up the flames will not consume you."

-Isaiah 43:2



just who you are, but also who He is? If this is not something you have considered, maybe stop and think about how into your day-to-day you can bring a more conscious awareness of whose you are so that the next time an emergency beckons your skills, you will remember, not only are you not going into this alone, but you also have Father's promise and presence to accompany you.

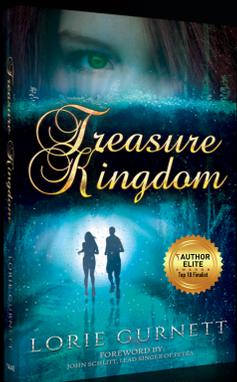
Article by Martyn Wood

# FREE OFFER

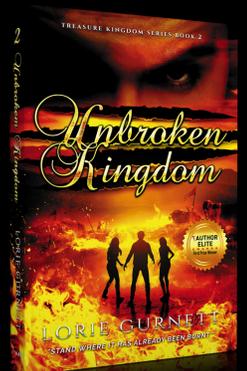
30-minute  
coaching call  
with Lorie  
Gurnett

**Do you long to have someone listen to you, encourage you, and help you figure out your next steps?**

**Email Lorie Gurnett to set up a free coaching call. She will help you gain clarity and make a plan.**



[lorie@authorloriegurnett.com](mailto:lorie@authorloriegurnett.com)





## GRIEF, DEATH, LOSS, AND POST TRAUMATIC GROWTH

Daniel Sundahl

I used to think trauma was only related to physical injury, and grief only happened when someone died. Well, I certainly learned my lesson on what these terms meant, and I was surprised at the unexpected benefits of experiencing these emotions. In the last 18 months, I lost my father, marriage, house, career, and my dog. My values were tested as my world exploded and was turned upside down. Yet, working through my grief and trauma has somehow made me a better person in many ways.

In 1969, psychiatrist Elisabeth Kubler-Ross introduced the “Five Stages of Grief.”

Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. I would wake in the middle of the night and be overwhelmed with a feeling of loss and grief, then cry uncontrollably into my pillow.

Unfortunately, my brain didn’t seem to know the order of Dr. Kubler-Ross’s stages of grief or the order I was supposed to process them. For me, I processed more like this: Anger, denial, depression, then acceptance. I seemed to skip bargaining altogether. Acknowledging what was happening to me, along with acceptance and time, is what carried me through. Allowing myself to process and feel grief, sadness, and loss seemed to release some of the intensity of my experience. Before her death in 2004, Dr. Kubler-Ross said, “The five stages of grief were never meant to help tuck messy emotions into neat packages. They are responses to loss that many people have, but there is not a typical response to loss as there is no typical loss. Our grieving is as individual as our lives.”

In 2014, I was diagnosed with PTSD resulting from experiences I had while working as a paramedic and firefighter. I turned to creating artwork to purge these organic monsters from my mind who invaded my consciousness uninvited. At first, I never intended to share what I had created. My artwork shows first responders in vulnerable situations, sometimes experiencing overwhelming scenes leading to suicide. I was worried I would be judged

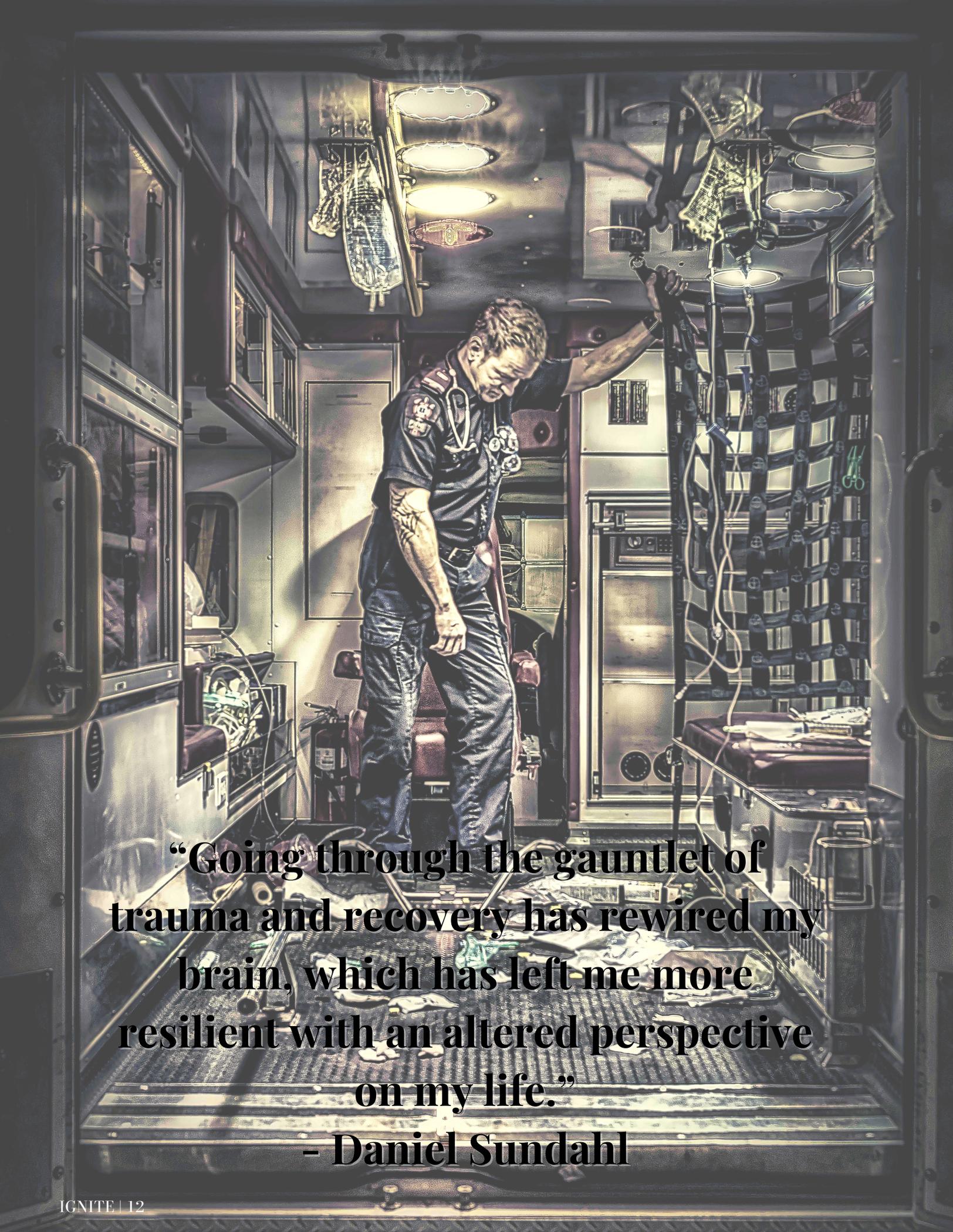


for creating such images in a community where we were supposed to be heroic life savers, showing no cracks in our armour. However, I was surprised that so many of my peers would look at my images and attach their own experiences to them. This made me feel accepted, normal, and less broken. Like my recent grief and loss experiences, my PTSD symptoms lessened with time. Going through the gauntlet of trauma and recovery has rewired my brain, which has left me more resilient with an altered perspective on my life.



## Post Traumatic Growth – Finding Benefits within Challenges

Post-traumatic growth is a positive psychological change that results from a life crisis or traumatic event. The term was coined by psychologists Richard Tedeschi, Ph.D., and Lawrence Calhoun, Ph.D., in the mid-1990s. Dr. Tedeschi and Dr. Calhoun suggest people who endure psychological struggles can experience favourable growth afterward. People experiencing post-traumatic growth experience positive changes in the following areas: Appreciation of their lives, relationships with others, new possibilities in life, personal strength and spiritual change. It's not as unusual as I had first thought. Many religions believe there is no growth without suffering; even the superhero world uses it to mould characters like Spiderman, Batman, and the Hulk. I often meet many of my fellow emergency workers who show signs of post-traumatic growth after experiencing trauma and recovery. They have become a better version of themselves than who they were before their trauma.



**“Going through the gauntlet of trauma and recovery has rewired my brain, which has left me more resilient with an altered perspective on my life.”**

**- Daniel Sundahl**

Trauma, grief and loss forced me to rebuild and fortify my values. Seeing my beliefs and sense of right and wrong shattered by my experiences gave me no choice but to rebuild my perspectives on my life, relationships, and the world as a whole. I experience loss, grief, and trauma in my own way. It feels like a rollercoaster, but the dips and climbs become less extreme over time. I continue to learn and benefit from my experiences; I wish the same for my family, peers, and friends who also suffer from grief, loss, and trauma.



Article by: Daniel Sundahl

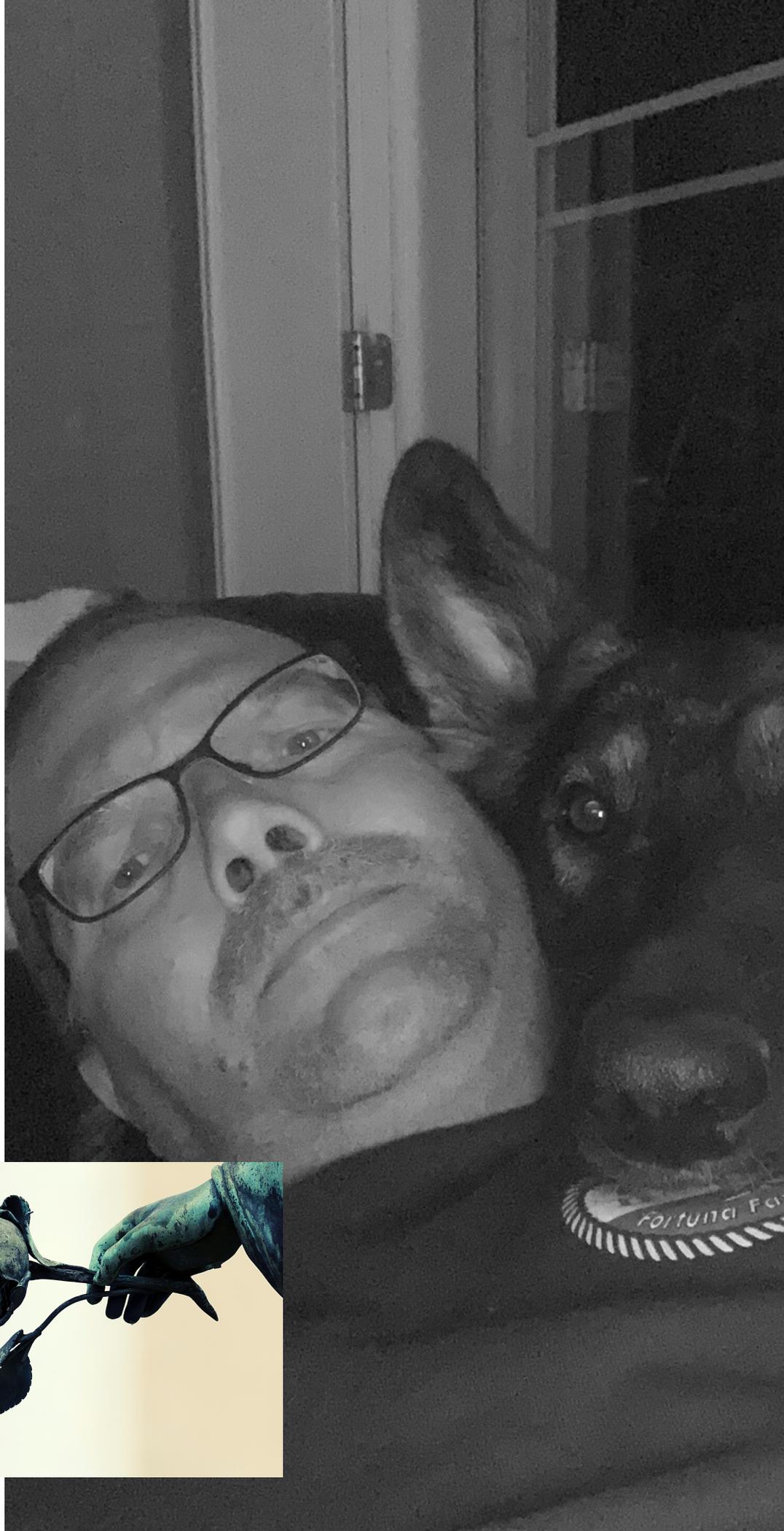
"The artwork I create is the result of my therapy. It's how I process and purge the negative emotions and feelings I've received from a long career witnessing trauma and suffering. The process has rewired my brain and changed my perspectives on everything. The journey has been incredible."

- Daniel Sundahl

# I WISH MY MIND COULD FORGET WHAT MY EYES HAVE SEEN

BY: PATRICK BOCK

My journey in the fire service started in Ontario, and it was full of the old generation firefighters who didn't talk about any of the traumatic calls we attended. They all just said, *forget about it*, and I thought that was the normal reaction to have, until one day it involved a teenager we all knew. That hit close to home. That was the day I heard a phrase that has stuck with me, "I wish my mind could forget what my eyes have seen." Everybody on that call was changed forever. Some of us had people to talk to, but I didn't. We had no services to





**I wish my mind could  
forget what my eyes  
have seen**



talk to, or we weren't told about any; so I just kept going, trying to forget.

After about 12 years, I left the fire service and started to heal from all the bad calls. I found my wife Marilyn, and we had 3 beautiful daughters. We will be celebrating 12 years of marriage this year. I got a job in Saskatchewan and decided to try the fire service there. It seemed to be going good: we had some bad calls, but they did debriefings with everybody who attended, and it seemed good. But it brought back so many memories of all the previous calls I'd

been on. My wife asked me what was wrong. I would never tell her because I didn't want to expose her to what I'd seen. I was starting to snap at my family, and they didn't know why.

Looking to find a new job to move us away from the area, hoping a new start would be good for us, I got a job in Alberta. I went right back to the fire service as I love the job. This department was way different with members hanging out away from calls, having a breakfast every Friday morning, our Deputy Chief and Chief being very involved with the members, training, assisting with community events, taking part in Make-A-Wish Foundation, getting certification, and



learning to train new recruits in the fire service. If we had a bad call, they did a debrief right away and brought in an outside agency that specialized in trauma and grief counselling, if needed. It did help, but I still had a short fuse and snapped at my family constantly. After a bad call, my wife kept asking, and I started to talk to her more about the call without going into much detail. That is when I realized how much that has helped me. With the bad calls, my wife is my rock and just lets me talk to her about any call that bugs me.

After a few years, I moved the family more north in Alberta and took a year away from the fire service. Not to long after, I jumped right back into it, met some good friends, and was very



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**"They all just said forget about it and I thought that was the normal reaction to have until one day it involved a teenager we all knew and it hit close to home."**

surprised at the help they have for their members. They have an outside agency that we have cards for, and help is available 24 hours a day, along with a peer support team. One requirement is that we have to take a Road to Mental Recovery course.

My wife suggested I use the help that is there to heal, so I did; and it has helped immensely. I don't snap at my family anymore, life seems happier, and I'm happy to spend any time I have with them, including my grand kids. I still have some bad days, and my wife makes me talk it through; so I don't go back to the dark place. My German Shepard loves to cuddle with me when she knows something is bugging me. I am now part of a group that trains new recruits, mentoring once a year to a recruit. I'm looking to join the peer support team, so I can help others. We are one big family with many brothers and sisters, and we all have to look out for each other. The best part of the job is all the community events we attend, interacting with all the kids and just having fun. My best advice to anybody starting out in the fire service is, don't be afraid to ask for help. If something bugs you or you don't feel right about something, there are many services to help. If you're on Facebook there is a page for first responders to help by text, messenger, or a phone call. Ready to talk, support, and help.

Article by: Patrick Bock

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# HOW TO RESPOND FOR A HEALTHY MARRIAGE

TAMI MYER

You know exactly what to do when your neighbor is gasping for breath, but do you know what to do when your marriage is struggling?

As a trained professional, you may have used the letters DR ABC to direct you when responding to someone who has been injured. This same acronym can be a helpful tool in marriage, too. Every marriage needs attention and care in order to thrive, and this relational version of DR ABC can guide you as you work for a healthy marriage.

**Danger.** Can you accurately identify the threats to your marriage? A common but dangerous mistake is to see your spouse as the enemy. Re-calibrate your thinking to stay aligned with reality: you and your spouse are on the same team. You can lose this perspective when you feel hurt or frustrated, but being successful in marriage requires a team mindset.

Marriage is like a three-legged race. When one partner falls, the other stumbles, too. Bound together by a vow, a husband and wife can win only by running together. Put an arm around your spouse, and learn to harmonize your strides. Instead of competing, use your strengths to support one another.

When you encounter conflict, refuse to let your troubles come between you. Recognize each problem as a challenge to face together. In marriage, the only options are losing together



- D
- R
- A
- B
- C

or winning together. Work for the win/win!

**Respect.** Respect is the oxygen that your relationship breathes. Make respect an unconditional constant in your marriage. Although you can't respect bad behavior, you can always respect the inherent dignity of your spouse, who is created in the very image of God. Pay attention to your body language, be mindful of your tone of voice, and practice your best manners. Remind yourself continually to live in awe of the priceless spirit of your spouse.



"The healthiest marriages have the best support systems. Successful couples are surrounded by encouraging, cheering voices."

- Tami Myer



**Affection,** Affection is the oil that lubricates the friction points of your marriage. Affection is the kindness and cherishing that nurtures a relationship. Expressions of tenderness and love build security and create healthy bonding in marriage.

Your warm affection is an expression of your character, not a reward to control or manipulate your spouse. Like respect, affection in marriage must be unconditional. Affection and respect are not based on your spouse's behavior or performance, which can vary from day to day. Instead, esteem and love are based on your spouse's unchanging value and your unchanging commitment.

**D**anger (Stay on the same team.)

**R**espect

**A**ffection

**B**ids (Keep making and returning them.)

**C**all for support



**Bids.** What is the most significant indicator of a healthy marriage? Dr. John Gottman is a world-renowned researcher who spent decades observing the conversations of thousands of married couples. Dr. Gottman wanted to learn what distinguishes “marriage masters” from “marriage disasters.”

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He expected to find that successful couples share more personal details with one another and have more intimate conversations. But that is not what he discovered!

Instead, Dr. Gottman learned that successful couples have a high rate of making and returning one another’s “bids.”

Making and returning bids is like playing a game of catch: one spouse “tosses” the bid, and then the other spouse “catches” it. When playing ball, if you toss the ball but your partner then ignores it, the ball drops with a thud to the ground. That is disappointing!



"DISTINGUISH BETWEEN  
'MARRIAGE MASTERS' AND  
'MARRIAGE DISASTERS.'"

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FOR A HEALTHY MARRIAGE. PAGE 2/2)



**You are on  
the same  
team!**

"Respect is the oxygen  
that your relationship  
breathes."  
-Tami Myer

And how would you feel if your partner catches the ball but then angrily hits you with it? That would probably end the game! In marriage, when you ignore your spouse's bids or respond in a negative way, you are failing to return the bid.

Both bids and responses can be small, but they are hugely significant. Simply by observing the way a couple makes and responds to bids, Dr. Gottman can predict with 94% accuracy whether that couple will divorce within the next few years.

**What is the single greatest predictor  
of success in marriage?**



**A high level of making  
and returning bids.**

John Gottman

**Call** for back-up. The healthiest marriages have the best support systems. Successful couples are surrounded by encouraging, cheering voices.

Divorce is contagious, but so is marriage success. Get a marriage mentor. Read a great book on marriage. Pray with a friend on a regular basis for your marriage. Attend a Weekend to Remember. If your marriage is in crisis, reach out to

your church leaders or call Focus on the Family.

As a first responder, you have been willing to learn, work hard, and persevere. The tasks are often challenging, but the successes are rewarding. As a husband or wife, you can bring to your marriage that same willingness to learn, work hard, and persevere. The task can be challenging, but the success is glorious.

Article by Tami Myer



"AFFECTION IS THE KINDNESS AND CHERISHING THAT  
NURTURES A RELATIONSHIP."

- TAMI MYER

# IN HONOR OF OUR FALLEN HEROES

William "Bill" Bing

Sheilah Sweatman

Marcel Andrie

John Craig

Reginald Richard Hunt

## HEROES

"A hero is someone who understands the responsibility that comes with his freedom"

- Bob Dylan