

I G N I T E

TUNNEL PHOBIA:
LEARNING TO GO
THROUGH THE
TUNNELS OF LIFE

I WAS NOT
LOOKED UP TO

FINDING
VICTORY OVER
FEARS

IT'S OK NOT TO
BE OK

UNITING FIRST RESPONDER FAMILIES

YOU MATTER!

Starfield
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Protective Systems

IGNITE Magazine

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IGNITE MAGAZINE

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“He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.”

- Titus 3:5



Lyndon Davies

I am Lyndon Davies. The deputy chief of Paradise Valley volunteer Fire Department in Alberta, I have been a proud member of the department since 2008. My day job is working for Anderson Ag ventures. A local farmer who is also my neighbor, also I work the evening shift at a local seed cleaning plant. My hobbies are my small cattle and grain farm that I work with my wife, mom, and stepdad. I enjoy working with cattle and all the busy times of the grain farming industry. My real passion is fire fighting and being a medical first responder. Responding to MVC's, structure fires, wildland fires, to medical calls. There is nothing more rewarding than being able to be there and help somebody that you may know or a total stranger, on what could be their worst day.



Denny Bates

Dr. Denny Bates is Principal Consultant for Quality Leadership Consultants, founder of Something New Christian Publishers, Something New Ministries and The Quality Disciple, Life Coach for i Hope Christian Care and Counseling, adjunct faculty mentor in the Columbia Biblical Seminary online Doctor of Ministerial Leadership program, and a founding member of the John Maxwell Team of certified coaches, speakers, and trainers. He is also a "story coach" helping others become published writers.



Ray Burlet has been a member of the Paradise Valley Fire Department for over 35 years. His serving capacity began as Fire Chief, then Deputy Chief then to Captain as he proudly watched the younger members he mentored rise to the challenge. He has been married to his wife Merle for 42 years. She has also served on the department for 30 years. Ray is a mechanic and manager of a local garage in Paradise Valley. He enjoys taking care of his cattle and has been a goalie for the PV Rangers for 36 years.

IT'S YOUR CHOICE, WHAT WILL YOU CHOOSE?

Editor's Inspirational

Sometimes coming out of the Christmas season can be full of emotions. Relief, excitement, depression, or anxiety. To name a few.

I have felt the sting of losing a close loved one in about a month before Christmas, I have lived through the pain and sting of suicide around boxing day. But I have also witnessed the importance of family.

With the start of a new year, I ask you this, what will you hold dear to your heart? For me family is dwindling fast, and fears of loneliness, hopelessness, and sorrow are knocking at my door. How you been plagued by similar emotions? These could be caused by loss, trauma, or stress. But one thing remains important. You have people who care about you and you make an impact in their lives in more ways that you could ever imagine.

Never lose heart or hope, seek help and comfort from those around you and admit you struggle. We all do, in different ways but our life journey should always be moving forward.

So be it financial strain, grief, or trauma that is sapping the life out of you, remember that you are held and loved.

I challenge the way you think. How do you take things in?

I made a decision, I think I want to embrace the differences of this new year. I have decided since every year is different, holding both pain, growth, joy's, and laughter, I will choose to see the differences as a new adventure. Yeah 2022, has beat me up and left me both bruised and drained, but 2023 is a new year.

How will you choose to live your life in 2023? Reach out and share, your stories.

“Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: ‘forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

~ Phil. 3: 12-14

By: Lorie Gurnett

I Was NOT Looked Up To

By: Lyndon Davies

Hello I am Lyndon Davies I am a firefighter medical first responder on the Paradise Valley fire department. I have been part of the PVFD since 2009, while still in high school. Became interested in the fire department while working for my now father-in-law who is a member. For as long as I have known him, he has been a role model in my life and someone I have looked up to. I had a friend in high school that was on the department, hearing her talk about all the fun training and fires they went to caught my interest So I joined the PVFD not really knowing what to expect.

When I joined the fire department, they were about a year into a young ambitious fire chief that was driven to have a well-trained and well-equipped department. I did not know it at the time but the direction of the fire department was turning from a group of well-meaning people, just out doing the best they could with what they had, to a trained group





town will be surprised if you are not in jail before you are 20." I was blown away, shocked! Why? What did I do? I thought and I denied it for a bit and thought no way, but then it made more and more sense. I was never a solid community member and did plenty of stupid things then brag about it all. The more I thought about it the more it made sense. I was the kid that you did not want your kids to hang out with. So, the more I thought of it was all coming clear. Why would they put time and money into me if they thought I was not going to be around.

of professional firefighters. I was in for a surprise as I thought cavalier thoughts about what being part of the fire department really meant. After about six months I was able to take an in house s300 (entry level course) and I really saw what it meant to be part of the fire department and wanted to learn more and do more fire related courses.

Every time a course came up, I put my name in to take it. Almost a year went past and I was not able to take any. Was always told the class is full. Started putting it together that my name was never getting posted or was last on the list. This really bothered me and so I did a bit of digging as to why. I found out that I was not expected to stick around the area. Some people even went as far as hoping I would move away once I was done school. This bothered me more. I could not figure out why or what I did. I started asking around to people that knew me and I was able to get a straight answer from one of my mentors. He told me straight, "man most people in this

From then on, I decided I was going to be a better version of myself. I wanted to be the person that my family and town could be proud of. If I do that maybe my department would take me serious as a firefighter, and start sending me to courses. So, from then on, I worked hard going to work in the morning before school and after. My dad told me "If you stay busy you got no time for trouble." I went to all the training I was able to and continued putting my name in for every course that came up. I was surprised that it really did not take long for some of the senior firefighters and younger leaders to see the change of behavior. It still took a bit of time to gain the confidence of some, but I just kept quietly working. Keeping my head down and doing all I could when I could. By the time the next set of course came up in the county I was enrolled!

Since then, I have been lucky enough to complete my 1001 and 1002, wildland firefighter and many other fire and medical first responder courses I have been lucky enough to take. I cannot give enough thanks to all the people that have

*“I am the lead
character of
my one story.”
-Ewne Bremner*



“In this life, you don’t have to prove nothing to nobody but only thyself.”
-Fortune, ‘Rudy’



been on this journey with me. Those that have been there from that start, always wanting the best for me. Also, those that maybe looked down on me. They gave me the motivation to push through and try hard to prove them wrong.

I am now deputy chief and lead training officer at Paradise Valley Fire Rescue. Many people look to me for answers and direction in stressful and emotional times. That is a job I do not take lightly. I am so proud of our department and honored to be a part of it. Looking back, I would not change anything about the path I have taken and the people in this journey I stand alongside.

In closing I hope to inspire people that are looked down on at times or thought low of and I would tell them “don’t be the person everyone thinks you are or wants you to be, be something better! Be who you want to be!”

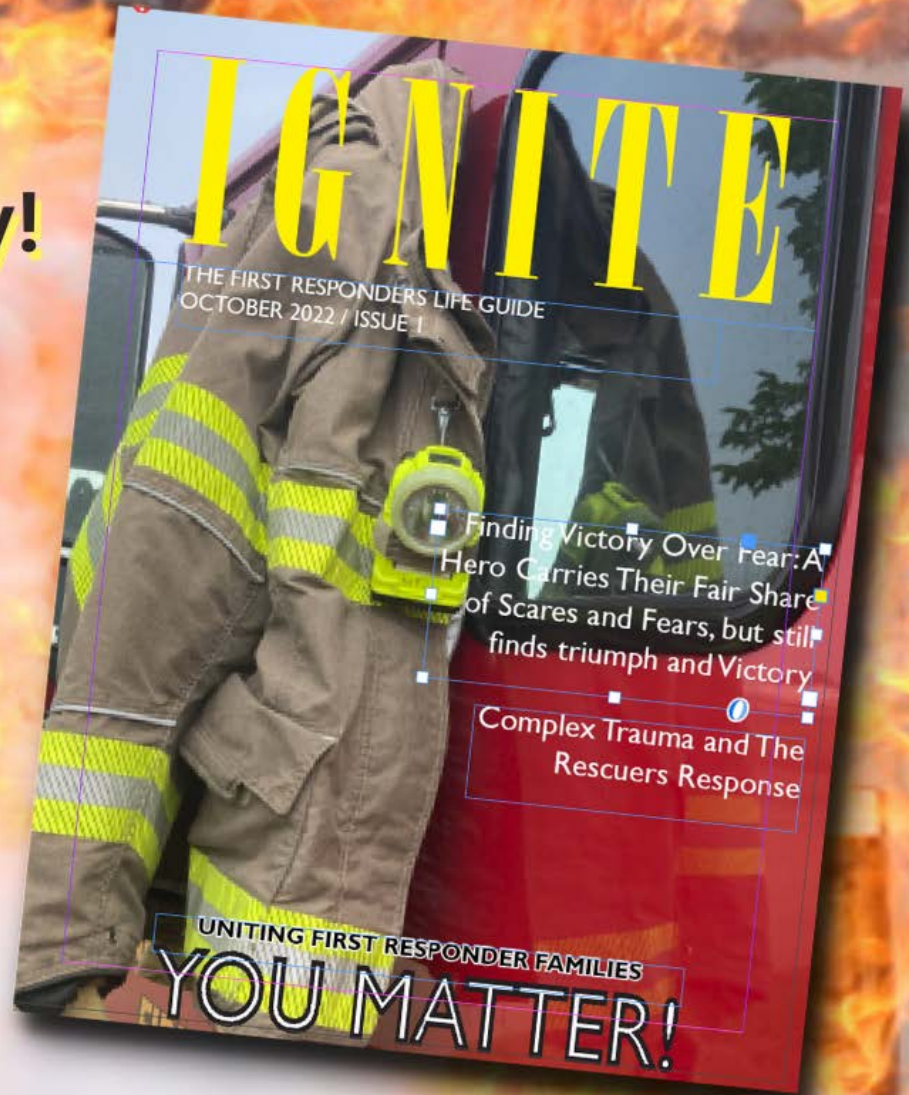
Key points:

- 1- Be who you want to be. Don’t let people tell you who you are or who you want to be. No one knows you better than you.
- 2- The easy path is rarely the rite path and doing the right thing for you is not always easy. But you will be surprised at what you are capable of.

Article by: Lyndon Davies

BUILDING A STRONG FIRST RESPONDER COMMUNITY

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*Trauma does not have to be fought alone, ignite
your ambition, find your purpose.
You are worth fighting for!*

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Tunnel Phobia: Learning To Go Through The Tunnels Of Life

By: Denny Bates

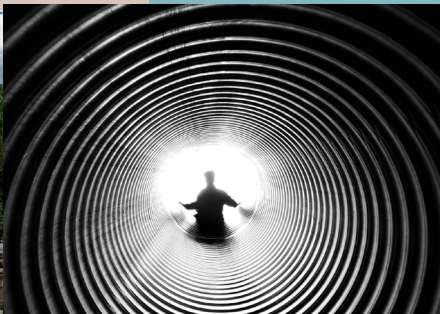
As first responders we do not have to do life alone. When we live in community, everyone becomes a part of our story.

A strong community of friends can even help us overcome our fears.

For example . . .

When you are approaching the kinds of challenging experiences you dread, your heart may race with . . .

powerful FEELINGS
unsettled FEARS
wavering FAITH



Photography by:
Antony DeRosa



Photography by:
Burak The Weekender

A year ago I thought I was a master of the highway. I could drive on any road, for any length of time and go anyplace without exception, except with tunnels that were roughly cut into the mountains of Virginia and West Virginia.

I was on the second leg of a business trip to Columbus Ohio. For the first time, ever, I became very uneasy on what I was about to experience.

It took me by surprise.

As I entered the first tunnel, I took a deep breath and then it got worse as the lights of the cars and other tunnel lights began to flicker off the ceiling like an out of control metronome. I slowed down. I could not stop. I could hardly wait to get to the other side where open air was my welcoming companion.

“Well, that was fun!” But I got through it and began to relax again.

Until...

The next tunnel was in my immediate future. It was an even longer one.

It was waiting for me.

Silently stalking me.

Mocking me.

Waiting to pounce.

Before getting there, without going another mile, I was defeated. Yes, I got through it. But I was in no mood to go

through another one.

When we are defeated, what's our strategy?

For some of us we go into avoidance mode.

Coming back home I took another “non tunnel” route (and a no toll roads to boot also) back home.

Here's the lesson: I avoided confronting the fears that lies behind my tunnel. I did not face it. And that makes all of the difference in the world.

That was last year.

This is a new year to grow.

I've been through a narrow tunnel a few times now on Muddy Ford Road in Greenville SC. On a country road there is a sign posted “Slow Down. Narrow Opening.” The speed is posted at 25 mph. People go through it every day. I've done it too, with my friend Leigh Ann driving.

Now for the first time, with Leigh Ann riding with me, I'm driving.

It feels (like on the inside of me) I want to turn around, but I slow down and get through it. Not at 25 mph, more like 10 or 15, but I got through it.

“Passed the test!” Or so I thought.

This time I'm driving a 20-foot U-Haul truck that's wide and even more imposing, two large mirrors extended miles from the cab.

Took another deep breath: “Can I make it with this rig?”

Have you ever been stuck in a moment in time? I was.

And then, coming from the other direction, just ahead of me I see a FIRETRUCK going through it.

A first responder! A BIGGER truck showed me the way of how it was possible.

That got me thinking about some of the paralyzing fears that keep us from moving forward. Without a doubt, the feelings are powerful, the fears are unsettling and very real, and our faith can waver, a lot. But the greatest equalizer of them all, the one that can compensate for all of our “tunnels,” is the greatest First Responder of them all. His name is Jesus.

Out of our fears, He comes as a rescuer; our First Responder, even in, especially in tunnels.

Learning about tunnels with you,

Article by: Dr. Denny Bates

“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ‘ John 3:16



“Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.”
-Psalms 23:4 NLT

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Community/Unity

When we live in community, everyone becomes a part of our story A strong community will help us overcome our fears.

My friend showed me the way through the tunnel by driving me in her car first Then, later, my friend let me drive her through the tunnel The First Responder reminded me it could be done





FIREMEN'S PEAYER

**WHEN I AM CALLED TO DUTY, GOD
WHENEVER FLAMES MAY RAGE,
GIVEME STRENGTH TO SAVE A LIFE,
WHATEVER BE IT AGE.**

**HELP ME EMBR A LITTLE CHILD
BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE,
OR SAVE AN OLDER PERSON
FROM THE HORROR OF THAT FATE.**

**ENABLE ME TO BE ALERT AND
HEAR THE WEAKEST SHPUT,
AND QUICKLY AND EFF
TO PUT THE FIRE OUT.**

**I WANT TO FILL MY CALLING
AND GIVE THE BEST IN ME
TO GUARD MY EVERY NEIGHBOUR
AND PRTECT THEIR PROP.**

**AND IF, ACCOR TO MY FATE,
I AM TO LOSE MY LIFE,
PLEASE BLESS WITH YOUR
PROTECTING
HAND THE SPECIAL PEOPLE IN MY
LUF.**

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Finding Victory Over Fears

A Hero Carries Their Fair Share of Scares and Fears, but still finds triumph and Victory

Article by: Lorie Gurnett

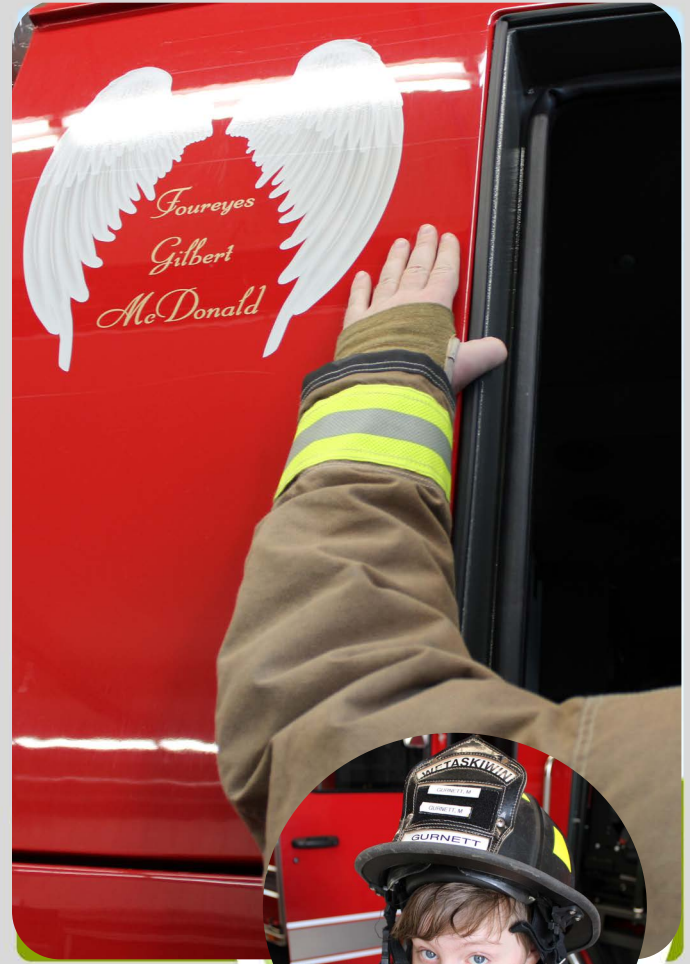
What defines who you are? What I mean is how do you describe or see yourself? There are many different ways people can answer this question. Some connect themselves with their peers or community they live in. Others by what they do, for example their jobs or perhaps their hobbies. Still others by their social class or relationships. But let me ask you this, if you were to lose that part of you, how would you then communicate who you are?

The roles in my life have changed a number of times over the years. I am a daughter, wife, and mother. Like the apostle Paul says, *"I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need."* Philippians 4:12-13. What you do and who you surround yourself with is not who you are. Yes, it helps to define a direction for your life, but ultimately you will not stop being you, if such areas of your life change.

The role of the first responder is very demanding on you and can feel very dark and lonely at times, but I tell you, that

being a first responder is not who you ultimately are. Even though being a first responder is deeply embedded in your life, you are still you if something pulls you away from that.

The adrenaline rush, the need to help others, and the big hearts within you do become your driving force, but when tragedy hits, the darkness or ugliness of



those deadly calls suck from the inside out. The monster within will eventually destroy you if you don't admit you struggle. It is only human to struggle when facing these traumas. You can become more of a hero to your family when you start seeking help and taking the much-needed time to heal.

Hiding your trauma helps no one. The more you try to hide your inner struggle the more the monster's anger will be revealed. You will begin to allow the darkness the



can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." Ecclesiastes 4:12

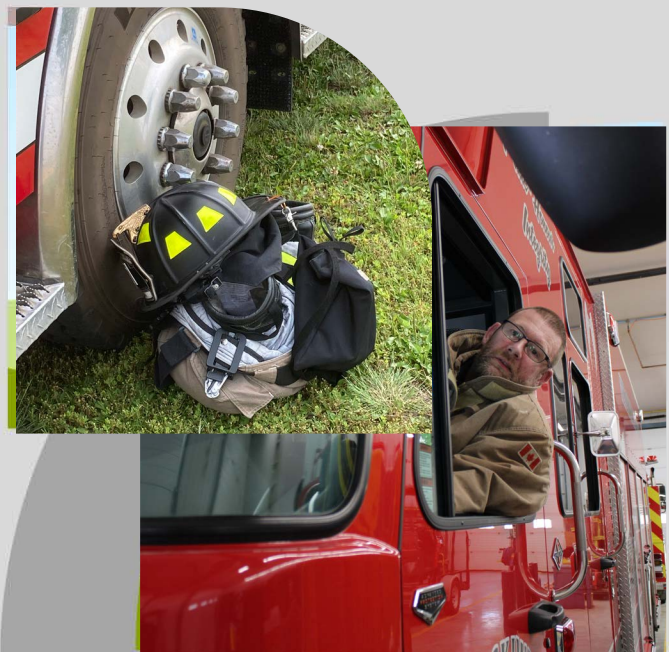
Maintaining a healthy mindset is just as important as your physical health. Many people strive to keep their bodies healthy through what they eat and how they exercise, but the mind often gets neglected. Training your mind to not just clocking out in front of the television. It is important to engage in conversation. This will remind you of what you value and will teach your mind what you want to focus on. We all have a minds eye, and what we train our subconscious to look for will become the priority of this minds eye. For example, if you tell your subconscious to focus on a red mustang, this will become your minds eye's goal. You will soon notice that you see a lot more red mustangs around then before because that is what you told your subconscious to look for.

Or perhaps you and your spouse are expecting a new baby, you will begin to see a lot more pregnant woman around you. You start looking at other families and your mind will point out

strength it needs to isolate you. This pain will lie to you and tell you that you are protecting your family from this darkness, when in reality you are pushing them away and not only isolating yourself but them too.

There is hope! When you admit you are struggling, you give others the permission to help, as well as give yourself permission to begin healing. Take the time to connect with a trauma expert in physiology who can help you make sense of the cluttered emotions that are screaming at you.

By no means, am I an expert at all. I do not have any counseling experience, so I share what I have learned over the years of dealing with trauma in my own life as well as with my husbands' trauma. Some key coping skills that have helped us work through anxiety and panic attacks are as follows. Remember to breath! Breath in through your nose for four seconds and out through your mouth for eight seconds, when panic and anxiety threaten to take control. You can run your wrists under cold water to shock your system back to reality and more clearly focus of what is in front of you. If you are married, be honest with your spouse. Admit the emotions that you are battling with in the moment. We all have our inner battles, but battles are meant to be fought as a team. *"Though one may be overpowered, two*



pros and cons and you begin to develop what you want your new family to look like. The minds eye is a powerful part of your body. When trauma enters in, this darkens the view of your minds eye in a negative way. Soon you only see dysfunction, feel segregated, like you don't fit in anywhere. A lot of times, nothing has change around you, but your view has. When you push these feeling deep within, eventually they will surface, especially when you are vulnerable or let your guard down.

If you allow these emotions to go unchecked or untreated, this can lead to thoughts like *"my family would be better off without me"*, or *"I am just a burden, in order to make my family happier, I should just walk away."* I will tell you this now, these are lies and will destroy not only you but your family. No matter how many times you run or walk away, your struggles and anger will walk with you. Destroying your life, will destroy those around you too. You need to remember that others do care and understand. Your battle can find victory when you fight with those who love you. Allow them to love you and fight for you when you feel defeated and weak. They can be your strength and help you carry those fears through the storm that is ragging in and around you.

I have been married to a fire chaplain for 22 years, we have both faced suicide, anxiety, panic attacks, depression, loneliness, grief, and sever trauma. My husband has PTSD and depression, it wasn't until recently when we took the fight together, that he started to find his driving force, inner purpose, and passion once more. God has brought healing in many areas of our lives and we are a cord of three bond together in strength. But seven years into our marriage, I almost lost him to suicide. The pain of this memory weighs heavily on both us, but we chose to fight and to celebrate each new step we took because when we look back, we can see how each step has brought us forward. When you take time

to look back at where you started from you will be surprised with how far you have come, how much stronger you are, and you now have the tools to help others on this journey. The patience and compassion you develop through your healing you can show to others who are struggling.

Heroes struggle too and admitting this, will help you see that you don't stop being a hero if you struggle, but you become more of a hero to those around you because you understand their struggle and you love them all the more. So, looking within yourself and knowing the strengths you have developed over time, how would you answer the question? How would you define who you are? I am a survivor, a child of God, a daughter, a wife, a mother, and I choose to help others find victory over their fears.

Article and photography by: Lorie Gurnett

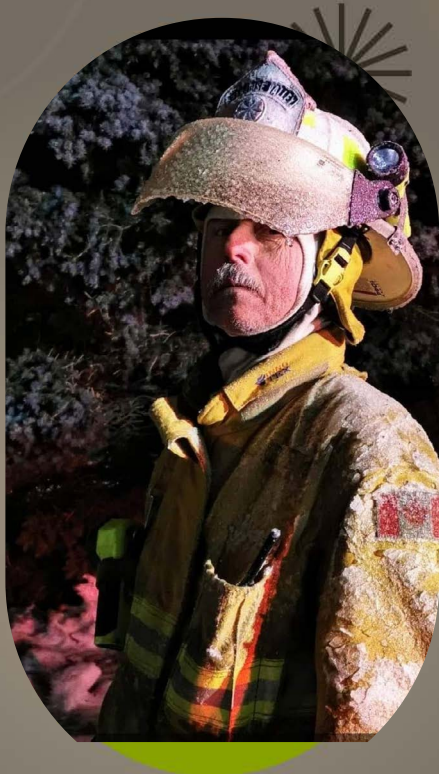


IT'S OK NOT TO BE OK

Article by: Ray Burlet

The loud piercing alarm from my fire radio breaks into my sleep! 2:30 am. As I try to get dressed and listen to the specifics coming at me from dispatch, my mind whirls with questions. Where is this call out in relation to where I am at, who and how many are responding from our Dept, has the blizzard let up? Is this a friend or family member needing our help? As I rush around getting prepared and head off to scene I pray, "Lord please be with the people we are responding to and be with each one of our members. You are a big, loving, and mighty God".

We are a small volunteer dept of 24 members covering approximately 400 sq. miles, responding to every type of emergency there is. More often than not, we do know the person or home we are responding to. That is a blessing and a curse in a single event.



My wife has been on our department for 30 years, becoming a Captain then Safety Officer. I've been on for over 35. I've become Chief, Deputy Chief, now a Captain. We are proud to watch the young ones we've mentored rise up through the ranks. How to deal with fires has changed since my wife's and my training, and these young ones are quick and smart. A true blessing to our department.

The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.

~ Psalms 29:11

However, the impact from seeing, hearing, tasting, and feeling the events we attend has not changed. What we deal with is not normal, it is anything but normal. Our young men and



When we arrive back at the hall after a call out, we take time to discuss it. We do this without judgment on anyone. There is no shame in being angry, confused, sad or indifferent. Everyone handles trauma in a different manner and there is no “one way” to react. We do however want to make sure that they are “handling” it in a healthy manner. Those of us that are older and more experienced let the younger ones know that we are always available, anytime, any place. To let them know that asking for help is not a sign of weakness. It is a sign on of strength we want to keep them “whole” rather than trying to pick up pieces and glue them together after they’ve broken.

*When I am afraid, I will trust in you.
~ Psalm 56:3*

We are also blessed with the wonderful opportunity on scene to either pray silently, have someone ask you to pray with them or being bold enough to ask if you can pray with someone, and this is a sweetness unlike much else. We have never had anyone refuse to let us pray for them. God is mighty and real. Amid chaos, He brings peace. Not just to the people and their families experiencing pain and suffering, but throughout the body of our members on scene as well. It’s through prayer that we have

women’s lives are impacted, changed by the events they speed heroically to. They are taught to focus on the job at hand, to set aside personnel involvement and emotions. Yet their senses are being bombarded with not only the sounds and activities from the scene itself, but from the thoughts within their own head. The “what ifs” and “am I doing this right”? Will this have consequences for them? There have been definite consequences and an impact for myself and my wife. Our reactions, our outlook on life. There are call outs over the years that have remained with us, the memory of the event popping up on occasion. There is no doubt that some of the events our young members attend will have a lasting impact on them.

The question we need to answer is, what can we, I, do to combat, aide in lessening that impact on our young members? To help them last throughout their years of service. To have peace and joy, remaining steady, strong, willing, and able.





“Who is my neighbour? The people in the area that our Fire Dept serves, the other members on my department. These are my neighbours. Whether I know them or not, agree with them, go to the same church as them, I am called to come along side, protect, love them. The second greatest commandment. Love your neighbour as yourself.”

the calming peace that enables us to walk into a scene that “shouldn’t be” and take care of others. To speak words of support, comfort, direction, and encouragement. It’s a marvelous testimony of the goodness of Christ.

*“I can do everything through him
who gives me strength.”
~ Philippians 4:13*

I am grateful that I know Jesus Christ as my Saviour. He is my strength, my rock, my comforter. When a call out has rattled my senses, it's Christ that brings me back to peace. He is the one that enables me to remain willing in my service on the Fire Dept. I want to continually be bold enough to speak freely about the peace of Christ to our young members. To pray with them, to walk along side of them as they try to make sense of what they have experienced. I want it to one day be them mentoring the young ones, offering words of encouragement and guidance. To be asked or ask if they can hold someone's hand and pray with them. To be Christ's hands and feet in the flesh.



*“Cast all your anxiety on him
because he cares for you.”
~ 1 Peter 5:7*

Article By: Ray Burlet



IN HONOR OF OUR FALLEN HEROES

Debbie Cheatwood
Ed Stauffer
Elton Bannon
Martin Desrochers
Mick MacFarlane

LL
KINDLY
LIGHT

PATTIE
BELOVED

WIFE AND MOTHER
PASSED OVER

HEROES

"The world breaks everyone, and afterward,
many are strong at the broken places."

-Ernest Hemingway