



ASSIST's Helping Hand Newsletter

Terrorism Survivors Helping Survivors

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JAN TO JUN
2023

Moral Injury By Worley (Lee) Reed

ASSIST is dedicated to helping injured survivors of terrorism with legal, medical and financial assistance based on available organizational funds. ASSIST endeavors to fill the gap between government entitlements and real need.

The American Society for the Support of Injured Survivors of Terrorism, Inc. Newsletter is published quarterly at Lake Wales, FL. The Chief Editor is Bret W Reed, Administrative Officer.

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Please send correspondence to ASSIST, 4371 Dinner Lake Blvd, Lake Wales, Florida 33859-2135 ☐

Author Note: I was waiting in my doctor's office recently, and I picked up the December 2022 issue of Scientific American. I found an article on a newly discovered terrorism survivor's syndrome: Moral Injury. I researched the topic and decided to write an article about Moral Injury in our Newsletter. I know there are concepts and ideas in this article that will possibly challenge your current moral beliefs. I ask you to keep an open mind about the discussion, and then you can form your moral beliefs as you see fit.

This is fundamental to a free society: open discussion then free development of one's own beliefs.

"Moral injury is a specific trauma that arises when people face situations that deeply violate their conscience or threaten their core values. Those who grapple with it...can struggle with guilt, anger and a consuming sense that they can't forgive themselves or others."

Moral Injury is different than Continued on Page 2



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We are grateful to the US Department of Justice and the National Organization for Victims Assistance (NOVA) for their support and leadership in the area of victims' rights.

Moral Injury (Continued)



Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome or Disorder in that PTSD results from a traumatic event that threatens a person's life or safety. Moral Injury occurs when a traumatic event causes a person to violate his/her moral code.

This problem not only involves terrorism survivors, but also doctors, veterans, lawyers, nurses, firemen, search and rescue workers, and others.

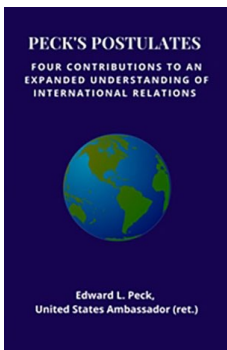
As children we are taught fundamental morals and core beliefs as strictly right and wrong actions. We see them as black and white, then we grow up to experience the real world where they are normally a medium grey. Morals, core values, laws and regulations were created to prevent us from interfering or harming the rights of other people. Some laws usually involving money were created for the common good.

Ambassador Edward Peck developed two postulates in his State Department career: (a) something is a undisputable law or regulation until someone says, "that's different."; (b) you cannot do just one thing. As soon as you do one thing, it causes additional second and third level unexpected things to happen which may be good or bad.

Every moral, belief, law and regulation was created to address a specific problem. The difficulty with them is that they can continue to be enforced when the problem they originally addressed no longer exists. Here are two examples: (a) In the Army, I was assigned a short tour (normally 12 months) in Korea

which is a war zone. When I arrived in Korea, I was told that my tour of duty was 13 months. I asked a personnel officer why it was 13 months. He laughed and told me that in the 1950's it took two weeks for soldiers to travel to Korea by ship and then two more weeks for them to return to the United States by ship. The extra month was created to allow for this travel. The problem was I had just flown to Korea in less than 24 hours; (b) in the State of Florida, it is illegal to purchase alcoholic beverages between the hours of Saturday 12 midnight and Sunday 12 noon. The law was created in the 1800's when men would go to a saloon and get drunk on Sunday morning, then they would go to church and disrupt the service. This law still exists but the problem of drunken men attending church has disappeared.

When you become an adult, you quickly learn that there are no absolutes in the world. Every moral principle, law, regulation, and core value has the same problem. Someone says, "that's different." For example, it is generally accepted that is morally wrong to kill another person. This core value was created to prevent us from taking away another person's right to live. Now, you are in a situation where a person is threatening to push a button that will blow up and kill 100 people. You have a gun and have warned him not to push the button. You also know if you shoot him, you will probably kill him. The threatening person starts to reach for the button. What do you do? If you kill him, you violate one of your core values. However, if you do not shoot him, 100 people will die. In my humble opinion, the threatening person has forfeited his right to live by trying to wrongfully take the lives of 100 people. The grey area equa-



Moral Injury (Continued)

Page 3

tion is simple: take one life and save 100 people or save one life and kill 100 people. The core principle of the Greater Good tells us the morally correct solution is to kill him. Moral principles turn into difficult moral decisions in difficult situations.

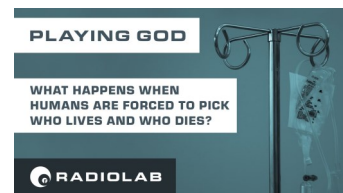
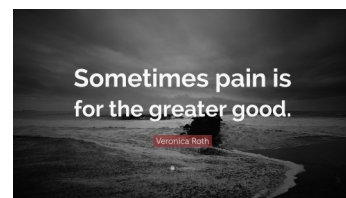
Terrorism survivors have our own set of moral dilemmas. The primary one is survivor guilt. All of us have asked the question, "Why did I live through the attack and others died?" The guilt of survival can cause depression and even suicide. The solution to this problem is to step back from the question by asking additional questions. For example, did I cause the terror attack? Was there anything I could have done to prevent the attack? Why was I in a safe location when others were in a deadly place? Do I have any control of who lives and who dies? When you feel survivors guilt, you are unfairly holding yourself responsible for something out of your control.

First responders and medical personnel suffer from the next problem: Could I have done more to save just one more life? Did I work hard enough to save lives? The answer refers back to the previous question. Did you cause the terror attack? Did you expend one hundred percent of your energy to save lives? Did you actually save a person's life by your actions? What more could any human being do that you did not do? Again, our guilt centers around the belief that we actually control what happens in our world. The reality is that we have little to no control. We are human. We may make mistakes but we try to learn from them and

move on with our lives.

Guilt can occur in the area of Triage. We are forced by the situation and available resources to decide: (a) who has minor to no injuries, (b) who could be saved by priority transportation to a hospital, and (c) who is going to die no matter if they go to a hospital or remain at the scene. The person making the decisions can feel guilty about "playing God." However, the solution is the word "forced" in the second sentence above. What are your choices? Should you transport a fatally wounded patient to a hospital and allow a person who could be saved to die at the scene without any medical care? You did not create this situation, but you are forced to make very difficult quick decisions. It is easy to sit back after the incident and play the "what if" game. But as a human being, you make the decisions you must make to save as many lives as possible. It is a terrible situation, but again one out of your control.

Terrorist attacks are serious emotional events. After the attack, survivors seek other survivors to find comfort, understanding and frankly someone to express their feelings and doubts to. Married survivors who share the experience usually chose each other. Unmarried survivors and survivors whose spouse is not there also seek



Moral Injury (Continued)

Page 4

out each other. The guilt comes later when the married survivor is reunited with his/her spouse. We have seen a high rate of divorce in this situation usually not because of some temporary unfaithfulness. The spouse of the survivor has no knowledge or reference points to regain a relationship with their spouse. The terrorist attack experience introduces a critical divide between the couple. It is as if they now speak two different languages. A few marriages do survive after years of working together to resolve the problems.

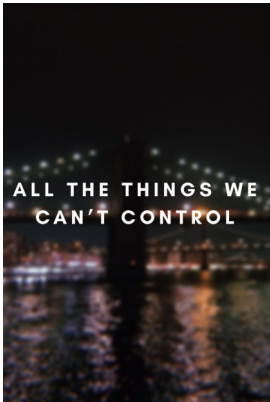
Seeking solace after a terrorist attack is a human response. The development of deep emotional attachments is possible. As human beings, we will love many people in our lives in many different ways. We are not machines. Usually relationships developed from intense circumstances do not normally last long. However, the emotional support to both members of the relationship is invaluable to the easing of the emotional damage caused by the attack. Given the situation, one should not feel guilty about seeking help from other survivors. Remember that morals, laws, rules and core values are grey so you look for the greater good.

So we are morally injured by an attack. We see that decisions we make are not easy, do not normally fit our black and white moral code, and most important are out of our control. Guilt implies the power to fail to make the established decision.

There should be no guilt because you did not have the power. Realize that we are frail human beings making mistakes while trying to do the best job we can in impossible situations. As someone once told me, there is nothing impossible. Just look at the word "impossible" and analyze it. I_M_Possible is the result. Being possible is not the same as being easy.

The best advice I ever heard about Moral injury is simply give yourself a break. You are right, you are not God. You are fallible yet you try to do your very best. You never gave up. You lived because you were destined to live. The world can be a very ugly place, but you try to make it better. If you were first responders or medical personnel, then there are people in the world alive now solely because of your actions and work. They see no guilt in you. They see only gratitude and admiration. Give yourself a break.

From a fellow terrorism survivor, thank you for your actions, work, unrelenting will to survive, and your ultimate act of defiance to terrorists: Continuing to Live. ◇





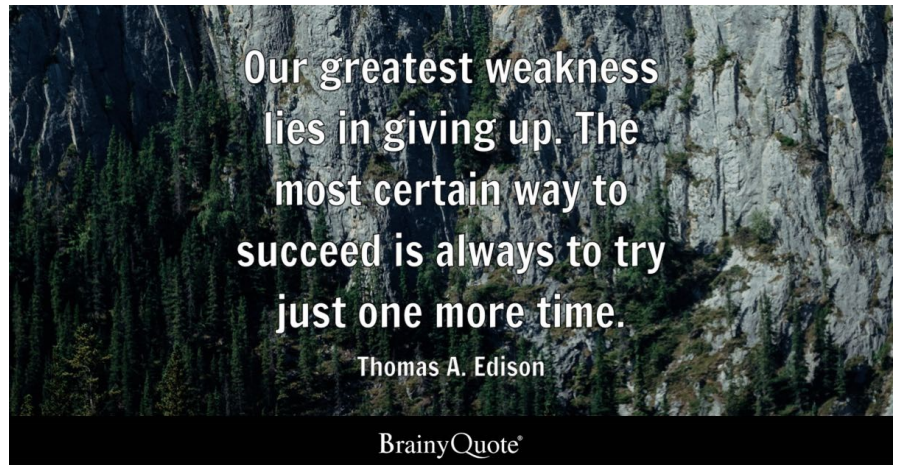
See <https://www.trynova.org/> for more information

The Good Life Section

This is why you stand for our National Anthem !



Please remember the over one point one million men and women who have died in uniform for us. Also, thank our living Veterans everyday



ASSIST

Memorabilia

The ASSIST memorabilia below are available from ASSIST, 4371 Dinner Lake Blvd, Lake Wales, Florida 33859. Please add \$4.50 to your total order for shipping and handling. All profits from the sales of items goes to support terrorism survivors.



ASSIST Coin (front and back) \$10.00

ASSIST Lapel Pin \$4.00



ASSIST Hat Adjustable \$10.00



ASSIST T-Shirt \$10.00 L and XL Based on Availability of Size

ASSIST Calendar

Jan 1—New Year's Day

Jan 16—Martin Luther King Day

Jan 17—Pipe Bomb discovered in Spokane, Washington 2011. Bomb would have exploded in a crowd at a Martin Luther King rally

Jan 24—Fraunces Tavern Bombing New York City 1975

Feb—Black History Month

Feb 2—Ground Hog Day

Feb 12—Lincoln's Birthday

Feb 14—Valentines Day

Feb 20—President's Day

Feb 22—Washington's Birthday

Mar 1—Women's History Month

Mar 13—Daylight Savings Time

Mar 17—St Patrick's Day

Apr 2—TWA 840 Bombing 1986

Apr 5—Berlin Disco bombing 1986

Apr 9—Easter

Apr 18—Beirut US Embassy Bombing 1983

April 19—Oklahoma City Bombing 1995

May 1—NYC Car Bomb 2010

May 5—Cinco de Mayo

May 12—Riyadh Western Housing Bombing 2003

May 14—Mother's Day

May 20—Armed Forces Day

May 29—Memorial Day

Jun 1—Little Rock Recruiting Center Shooting 2009

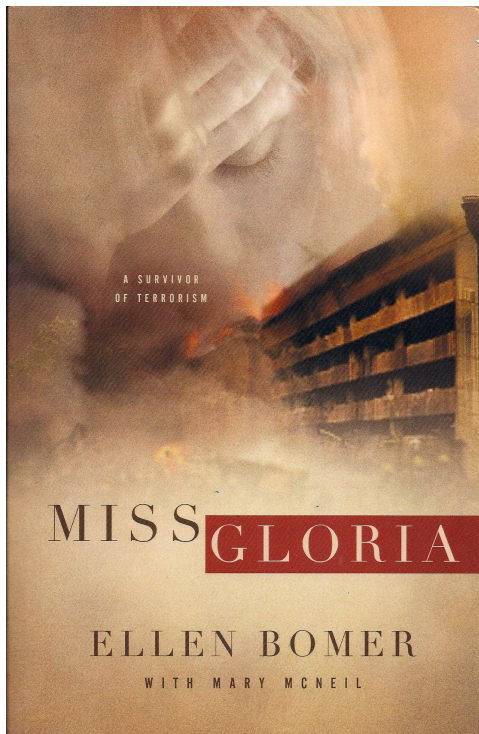
Jun 6—D Day (WWII—1944) 77th Anniversary

Jun 14—Flag Day

Jun 14—Karachi US Consulate Bombing 2002

Jun 18—Fathers' Day

Note: If we inadvertently omit an important date, please contact us and we will correct it.



Miss Gloria details the struggles and triumphs of a wonderful lady blinded by the Al Qaeda attack on the United States Embassy, Nairobi, Kenya on August 7, 1998. We highly recommend this book as a must-read.

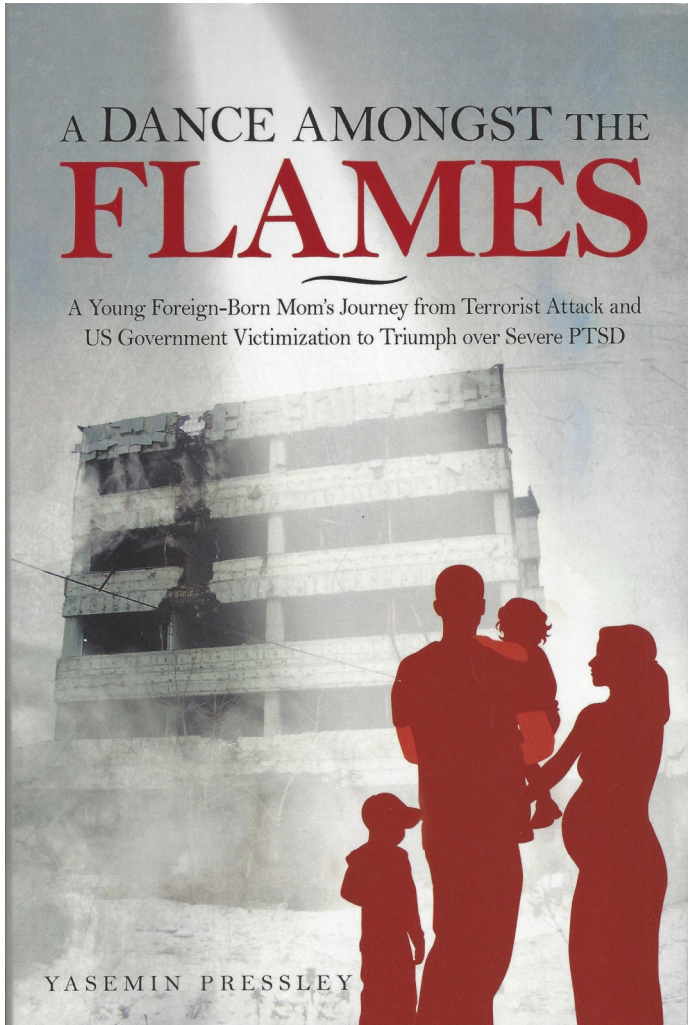
The book is available from the publisher: Redemption Press, 1730 Railroad St, Enumclaw, WA 98022 www.redemption-press.com as well as on Amazon Dot Com. http://www.amazon.com/Miss-Gloria-Terrorism-Ellen-Bomer/dp/1414113668/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1431978093&sr=8-3&keywords=Miss+Gloria



If you are seeking someone to help you manage your terrorism compensation or other funds, UBS has helped us find creative and safe investments. Our contact is Ms. Holiday Hayes, telephone: (202) 585-5372.

This is an unpaid endorsement by the ASSIST Staff, and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the ASSIST Board or ASSIST membership.

ASSIST has a new website:
WWW.ASSIST-SURVIVORS.INFO . It is
now fully operational.



A Dance Amongst the Flames is a highly recommended new book about the unique experiences of a terrorism survivor. The book is available at your local bookstore or through Amazon® at https://www.amazon.com/Dance-Amongst-Flames-Foreign-Born-Victimization/dp/0578581515/ref=sr_1_1?crid=20YC01N2RX455&keywords=a+dance+amongst+the+flames+by+yasemin+pressley&qid=1576686264&sprefix=A+Dance+Am%2Caps%2C160&sr=8-1 . A preview of the book can be found on Youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikt9Hk01818> .

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Terrorism Survivors Helping Survivors



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