

The Forgetting Pill Erases Painful Memories Forever

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Wired Magazine:

Jeffrey Mitchell, a volunteer firefighter in the suburbs of Baltimore, came across the accident by chance: A car had smashed into a pickup truck loaded with metal pipes. Mitchell tried to help, but he saw at once that he was too late.

The car had rear-ended the truck at high speed, sending a pipe through the windshield and into the chest of the passenger—a young bride returning home from her wedding. There was blood everywhere, staining her white dress crimson.

Mitchell couldn't get the dead woman out of his mind; the tableau was stuck before his eyes. He tried to tough it out, but after months of suffering, he couldn't take it anymore. He finally told his brother, a fellow firefighter, about it.

Miraculously, that worked. No more trauma; Mitchell felt free. This dramatic recovery, along with the experiences of fellow first responders, led Mitchell to do some research into recovery from trauma. He eventually concluded that he had stumbled upon a powerful treatment. In 1983, nearly a decade after the car accident, Mitchell wrote an influential paper in the *Journal of Emergency Medical Services* that transformed his experience into a seven-step practice, which he called critical incident stress debriefing, or CISD. The central idea: People who survive a painful event should express their feelings soon after so the memory isn't "sealed over" and repressed, which could lead to post-traumatic stress disorder.

Read the whole story: [Wired Magazine](#)