

# Avoidance Transcript

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*Video Transcript for SHARE*

## Avoidance

So the next area of symptoms is what we call avoidance and numbing symptoms. And this really is kind of a hallmark of PTSD if you will and it just makes logical sense that we don't like feeling pain, at all. And so I'm going to do everything I can to avoid anything that would cause me pain. Or if I can't avoid the pain then I'm going to do everything in my ability to numb that pain so that I don't have to experience it. And so that is kind of where avoidance and numbing comes from and you start seeing them avoiding any thoughts or reminders. So instead of having that psychological and physiological reactivity I'm just going to avoid anything that would trigger that in me.

You start seeing withdrawing from relationships, social isolation, an increase in substance use because that's a very easy way to numb and not have to remember, and or deal with that pain. And people have all kinds of behaviors that help numb out whether it is sex or gambling or food, anything that helps take them away from that pain and those reactions. So in this area you're not just going to see this loss of interest in activities but you're probably also going to see kind of the sense of foreshortened future, that their so used to being in this place of survival it's very hard for them to picture anything beyond that, and so their always pretty much in the right here or now or their working as hard as they can not to remember their past.

We're now going to take a look at a few clips that help demonstrate symptoms in the avoidance symptom cluster. *Remember Me* centers on two new lovers, Tyler whose parents have split in the wake of his brothers' suicide and Allie who lives each day to the fullest since witnessing her mothers' murder.

### *Remember Me clip:*

*Restaurant music playing in background, plates clinking.*

Allie: What desserts do you have?

Waiter: *Speaks in another language.* Mango ice cream with nuts and raisins.

Allie: Great! A, I'll have that and a glass of skim milk and then the lamp vindaloo. Thanks.

Tyler: Oh, can I have a chicken tikka masala and a kingfisher please?

Allie: I'll have my dessert first.

Tyler: Oh, is that a political statement or a medical condition, perhaps?

Allie: I just don't see the point in waiting. What if I die eating my vindaloo?

Tyler: *Clears his throat.* Is that probable?

Allie: It's possible. Embolism bursts, asteroid hits the restaurant. I'd die without having eating the one thing I wanted most.

Tyler: Sigh. The odds, the odds are...

Allie: Tell you what, guarantee me, swear to me on your eternal soul, that I make it through my entree and I'll wait. Before you answer, if I die, you're gonna have to live the rest of your life knowing not only did you lie to me, but you denied me of my one last indulgence, my last wish. Are you prepared to shoulder that kind of responsibility to prove a point?

Tyler laughing

Allie: Don't worry, I'll share.

The very first clip we see in avoidance is with Tyler and Allie out of *Remember Me*. Tyler and Ally are on their first date, and during this first date she orders dessert first, and she makes a point and goes into this whole conversation about why she orders the dessert first. Now this may seem very mundane or simple but it really gives us that theme of how a foreshortened future plays out in every aspect of her life.

In *Fearless*, after a near death experience in a plane crash, where he witnesses the death of his best friend and other passengers, Max Klein emerges a changed person, unable to connect to his former life or his wife Laura. He feels god-like and invulnerable.

#### *Fearless clip:*

*Phone ringing, background orchestra music playing, Max running and panting, slamming door, stomping on stairs, Max gasping for air, vehicle noises, horns and tire screeching, orchestra music increases speed and tempo.*

Max: *A flashback to riding in an airplane.* Let it go. I can let it go.

*Max panting, orchestra music stops, breathing sounds, horns and tire screeching, climbing on ledge, Max grunting, heavy breathing, orchestra music intensifies.*

Max: I can't live as a coward.

*Shoes scraping across the ledge.*

Max: Oh. *Heavy breathing.*

Max: Screams loudly and gasps.

*All noise stops except the sound of the wind and breathing. Max laughing. All background noise resumes. Max continues to laugh.*

Max: Laughs.

Laura: Gasp.

Laura: Talk to me. Tell me what's going on. Talk to me Max. Every day you have to jump off a roof or stand in front of a train so you can lose your fear, is that it? What about me? What about Jonah? You're like a crazy person.

Max: I'm not crazy.

Laura: Black is white and, I love you. We have lived together for 16 years. We have been great.

Max: Um, not always.

Laura: Yes, always. You've always been great for me. Even when I hate you, I know I love you.

Max: Sarcastic laugh.

Laura: I know you were happy too. Remember?

Laura: Do you remember our marriage?

Max: Sigh, even if I could remember, then what? How can I live in a memory?

Laura: You see that's cruel. You know that's cruel.

Max: Uh-huh, it's the truth.

Laura: The truth? You didn't tell Jonah the truth.

Max: It was very unfair to use him that way.

Laura: Fair? Well, you tell me what's fair. What am I supposed to do, let you kill yourself?

Max: I walked away from that crash with my life. That's what survived, the taste and touch and beauty of life.

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Laura: But I love that.

Max: I won't give that up.

Laura: I don't want you to give it up. Let me in. Let me be part of it.

Max: You can't.

*Hand hitting table*

Laura: I wish I'd been on that plane.

Max: I'm very grateful you weren't.

Laura: You don't make sense. You said it was extraordinary, so beautiful.

Max: You're right. I don't make sense and I don't want to.

The second clip under Avoidance is from *Fearless* and while we don't show the precursor what happens right before this scene is he is reminded of the crash and has to have a discussion with the attorney and his wife and his best friend's wife on the details of the crash. So we see him run up the stairs and go to the roof and then he ends up getting out on the ledge and he's remembering the fear and the terror of the accident and he gets up on the ledge to kill that fear.

Later that evening we have Laura, his wife joining him, and she really sums it up. She says, every day you have to jump off a roof or step in front of a train to lose your fear. We see through this, their conversation, that he can't connect to his feelings, he can't connect to his life, he can't reconnect to their marriage, and he doesn't have that capacity to feel and he has that very, very strong sense of a foreshortened future.