



Walking Toward Healing: A Review of *Walking from the Shadows* by Kevin A. Macomber

BOOK REVIEW

ANTHONY JAMES ALBRIGHT 

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ABSTRACT

This review critically examines *Walking From The Shadows: My Journey With Post Traumatic Stress Disorder* by Kevin A. Macomber (2025), a memoir that blends personal narrative with practical guidance for individuals living with PTSD. The book is structured around thematic chapters that reflect key stages in the healing process, such as “Accepting,” “Cutting,” and “Walking.” Macomber’s work is notable for its accessibility, emotional honesty, and utility as a self-help tool. This review evaluates the book’s structure, themes, tone, and relevance for both clinical and non-clinical audiences, highlighting its strengths and limitations within the broader context of trauma literature.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Anthony James Albright

Social Sciences Department,
University of California, Irvine, US

agreatagent@gmail.com

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Kevin A. Macomber's (2025) *Walking From The Shadows: My Journey With Post Traumatic Stress Disorder* is a deeply personal and practical memoir that offers insight into the lived experience of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Unlike clinical texts, Macomber's work is grounded in decades of personal struggle and recovery, making it uniquely accessible to readers who may feel alienated by academic or therapeutic literature. The book is structured as a thematic guide, with each chapter addressing a specific aspect of the PTSD journey. This review evaluates the book's structure, thematic content, tone, and potential applications in both personal and professional contexts.

STRUCTURE AND FORMAT

The book is organized into 16 thematic chapters, each titled with a verb that encapsulates a stage or strategy in the PTSD recovery process (e.g., *Accepting*, *Cutting*, *Drifting*, *Dying*, *Falling*, *Walking*). This structure allows for both linear and non-linear reading, making the book adaptable to the reader's current emotional state or needs. Each chapter concludes with a "THOUGHTS" section, encouraging journaling and reflection, which transforms the book into an interactive self-help tool.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

TRAUMA AS A UNIVERSAL EXPERIENCE

Macomber opens the book with a powerful assertion: "Trauma is trauma" (p. 5). This inclusive framing challenges the tendency to rank or compare traumatic experiences. Whether the trauma stems from military service, childhood abuse, or personal loss, the psychological aftermath can be equally debilitating. This perspective broadens the book's relevance beyond veterans to include anyone navigating the complexities of trauma.

CRITIQUE OF THERAPEUTIC LANGUAGE

One of the book's most compelling critiques is of the term "coping skills," which Macomber describes as vague and unhelpful: "Coping is an umbrella term like depression, which really does not give an actual state or method to measure or use" (p. 6). Instead, he advocates for specific, actionable strategies such as journaling, walking, and setting boundaries. This practical orientation is a hallmark of the book's utility.

THE NECESSITY OF CUTTING

In the chapter *Cutting*, Macomber discusses the painful but necessary act of removing toxic people, places, and objects

from one's life. He writes, "If you love somebody, let them go. But I would argue that this is incomplete and would add: if you love yourself, let them go" (p. 14). This chapter is a masterclass in boundary-setting and self-preservation, offering readers both validation and a roadmap for difficult decisions.

COGNITIVE FOG AND DISSOCIATION

The chapter *Drifting* introduces the term Macomber uses to describe his experience of cognitive loss and dissociation. He recounts moments of mental "drift," memory lapses, and physical symptoms such as tinnitus and balance issues. These descriptions provide a rare and valuable insight into the less visible symptoms of PTSD.

SUICIDAL IDEATION AND SURVIVAL

In *Dying*, Macomber addresses suicidal ideation with unflinching honesty. He recounts multiple suicide attempts and the isolation that nearly ended his life. Yet, he also offers hope: "At the time I hit bottom, I could have never foreseen where my life would eventually head" (p. 43). This chapter is a lifeline for readers in crisis and includes repeated encouragement to contact the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline—accessible by calling 988.

FAITH, FAMILY, AND FRIENDS

In *Trusting*, Macomber introduces the "Three F's"—Faith, Family, and Friends—as foundational to his recovery. He writes: "The Three F's without doubt has been the most powerful tool I have used, not only in finding a life partner, but in measuring the strength of any relationship" (p. 140). This framework is simple yet profound, offering a compass for rebuilding trust and community.

WALKING AS RECOVERY

The final chapter, *Walking*, is both literal and metaphorical. Macomber describes how walking became a daily ritual that grounded him and reconnected him with the world: "Walking evolved to me really enjoying the positive senses being stimulated and the experiences being created" (p. 160). This chapter encapsulates the book's central message; healing is a journey, often made one step at a time.

TONE AND VOICE

Macomber's tone is conversational, humble, and deeply empathetic. He does not present himself as an expert, but rather as a fellow traveler. His use of analogies—such as road trips, rubber bands, and amusement park rides—makes complex psychological experiences more relatable. The book's voice is particularly effective in reducing stigma and encouraging self-compassion.

AUDIENCE AND APPLICATIONS

This book is suitable for a wide range of readers:

- Individuals living with PTSD,
- Family members and caregivers,
- Mental health professionals seeking client-centered perspectives,
- Peer support group facilitators
- Veterans and first responders.

While not a substitute for professional therapy, the book can serve as a valuable adjunct to treatment or as a standalone resource for those without access to care.

STRENGTHS

- **Authenticity:** Macomber's lived experience lends the book credibility and emotional depth.
- **Practicality:** The book is filled with actionable advice and reflective prompts.
- **Accessibility:** The language is clear and jargon-free.
- **Empathy:** The tone is compassionate and nonjudgmental.

LIMITATIONS

- **Repetition:** Some concepts are revisited multiple times, though this is acknowledged as intentional for reinforcement.
- **Editing:** A few sections could benefit from tighter editing for clarity and flow.

- **Lack of citations:** While the book is not academic, occasional references to research could enhance its credibility for professional audiences.

CONCLUSION

Walking From The Shadows is a powerful contribution to the literature on trauma and recovery. Kevin A. Macomber offers a rare blend of emotional honesty, practical wisdom, and hopeful resilience. His book is not only a memoir but a manual—a guide for those who are still walking through the shadows, searching for light. “No matter how dark and endless the world may seem, it is important to keep walking forward” (p. 161). This book deserves a place on the shelf of every trauma survivor, caregiver, and mental health professional.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS

Anthony James Albright  orcid.org/0000-0002-5620-6425
Social Sciences Department, University of California, Irvine, US

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