

LAURA *Dabney* MD

J's Story  
Hating Dr. Dabney

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CASE STUDY

# Hating Dr. Dabney

Laura Dabney, MD

"Sometimes, you walk out of there and you have been beat up."

"J" used to consider Dr. Dabney—and therapists of every variety—a last resort. A self-described "Type-A" personality, he was a person in pursuit of perfection. Mental instability was not acceptable. Period.

Though, neither was the level of anxiety he'd begun to experience on a regular basis.

"It was almost debilitating," he recalls. "Eventually it got to a point where I could barely function." He decided that he had no choice but to seek help. "For a guy [with] my characteristics, it took nearly self-destruction."

"I hated Dr. Dabney at first because everything she said was a criticism ... She kept saying, 'I'm not yelling at you but I have to tell you these things.'"

But he didn't find therapy to be the rapid cure he'd hoped for. When Dr. Dabney told him that he should expect to feel some level of relief within a few months, he said he was "flabbergasted." He needed his life fixed—fast.

There, too, was the doctor's scrutiny.

"I hated Dr. Dabney at first because everything she said was a criticism ... She kept saying, 'I'm not yelling at you but I have to tell you these things.'" It took him years to accept her insights as observations, rather than personal attacks. "Literally," he explains, "you have to crawl out of an emotional hole."

Deep down, he knew to keep going, to keep working. Today, he sees the payoff. "I wouldn't be where I am today without what I went through."

His experience left him with plenty of advice for those considering therapy. First, he tells people, forget your expectations about timeline, control, all of it. He calls therapy a "journey more than a destination." And, he wants others seeking help to know, "You're really not a freak."

Then he adds, "It's very hard to have a flashlight put on you for 45 minutes and not take it personally. But on the other hand, that's what we pay her for—to uncover all this stuff."



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