



Rep. John Kriesel

*Director of Veterans Affairs, Anoka County
R-Dist. 57A (Cottage Grove, So. St. Paul, Newport)*

If Dr. Norman Vincent Peale was writing his incredibly popular book, “*The Power of Positive Thinking*,” today he would need to add a separate chapter on John Kriesel.

In 2006 Kriesel was nearly blown to shreds by a 200 pound roadside bomb in the parched sands of Iraq, but battlefield angels in army uniforms kept him breathing long enough to reach a field hospital. He died three times and was shocked back to life. Somehow he survived through four hospitals, 35 surgeries and months of recovery. He lost both legs and suffered numerous other major injuries, but it was the loss of two close friends that hurt the most.

The guy who wasn’t supposed to survive and was told he probably would be in a wheelchair the rest of his life walked out of Walter Reed Army Medical Center after nine months. Today he is a brilliant beacon illuminating Dr. Peale’s gospel of positive thinking to students, veterans, Rotarians, church groups and anyone else who will listen. “You are not going to get blown up by a roadside bomb, but at some point you will face hardship—physical or emotional,” he asserts, “and you can deal with it.”

Working with author Jim Kosmo, Kriesel reveals his motivational story in “*STILL STANDING: The Story of SSG John Kriesel*,” winner of six national book awards.

Four years after his near-death experience in Iraq Kriesel became a civilian marketing employee with the Minnesota Army National Guard and in 2012 was named Director of Veterans Affairs for Anoka County. He also is a frequent contributor on KFAN Sports Radio and member of the Minnesota House of Representatives. He was elected to the House in 2010 after a vigorous campaign where he was told a Republican could not win in his district. He personally visited several thousand homes in all weather conditions and literally wore out the socket in one of his prosthetic legs.

As a new legislator he was anything but a quiet freshman challenging even his own party and frequently speaking his mind. “Kriesel’s honesty is a breath of fresh air at the Capitol,” declared the Minneapolis Star-Tribune. He served as vice chair of the Veterans Services Committee and member of the Capital Investment, Judiciary, and Public Safety and Crime Prevention Committees.

Kriesel lives with his wife Katie and sons Elijah and Brody in Cottage Grove.

www.StillStandingStory.com