

A Voice I Knew

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It was a typical, busy Saturday afternoon. I had already responded to three calls when I heard the report of a skier down and not moving.

I was first on scene and found an unresponsive middle-aged male, not breathing and with no pulse. Bystanders reported that he had stopped at the edge of the trail and then fell over.

I immediately called for help, reported what I'd found and requested an ambulance.

Then I started CPR. It seemed like forever until more patrollers arrived and assisted with CPR. We quickly packaged him, doing CPR the entire time, and transported to the awaiting ambulance.

Our efforts were not successful.

At the time, I had been patrolling for only a few years and had never experienced an on-the-hill fatality. Over the next two days, replaying the event in my head over and over again, I had trouble sleeping, and was just not myself.

On the second night, I answered my phone to hear a voice I knew. I recognized it as a fellow patroller, the one responsible for reaching out to patrollers involved in bad scenes like mine.

We didn't speak long, but he helped me a lot when he said that what I was experiencing was both perfectly normal – and to be expected. He reassured me that everyone at the scene agreed that I had done everything in my power to save the man. He was also confident that I'd be okay.

We talked again a few more times over the next few days. Each time we talked, I felt better.

I got back to being myself pretty quickly. I don't know what might have happened if not for his support during those phone calls. But I'm forever thankful that he took the time to talk to me.