

## Healing Through Poetry: Rikki Thom's Story of Resilience



### Caliber Connect

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At Caliber Financial Services, we're more than just employees. Who we are outside of work shapes how we show up each day and the work we produce.

This month, we're proud to spotlight [@Rikki Thom](#), a Technical Business Analyst whose journey through grief and trauma has led her to become a passionate advocate for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Through her writing, Rikki is helping to break the stigma around mental health and encouraging others to speak up, embrace vulnerability, and seek support.

### **Permanently Altered**

In 2022, Rikki's life changed overnight when her mother was diagnosed with terminal cancer, with only months left. The emotional toll of becoming an "adult orphan," compounded by a complicated family dynamic, led to Rikki being diagnosed with PTSD in 2023.

“I always thought PTSD was something only war veterans experienced,” she shares. “But emotional and mental trauma can cause it, too. It’s a life-altering disease that causes permanent damage to parts of your brain.”

Rikki’s mother’s death, family estrangement, and PTSD diagnosis inspired her to begin writing poetry as a form of therapy. What started as an outlet for her feelings eventually led to Rikki accomplishing her lifelong dream: publishing a book. “Permanently Altered,” which was self-published earlier this year, is a raw, honest memoir of poetry chronicling Rikki’s experience navigating the complexities of trauma, loss, and grief.

### **Mental Health Advocacy**

Rikki is passionate about breaking the stigma around mental health, especially PTSD. She emphasizes that mental health conditions are just as real and serious as physical illnesses.

“I share my story in hopes that it helps at least one person,” Rikki says. “There’s still a stigma around mental health, but no one should ever have to feel embarrassed or ashamed to speak up about it. One nice word or comment to someone struggling could save a life.”

Her advocacy extends beyond her writing. She’s active on TikTok, where she’s found a supportive community, and she’s currently working on her second book, a collection of journal-style entries that delve deeper into her ongoing healing process.

### **A New Perspective on Work and Life**

Rikki’s experiences have reshaped how she approaches her career. After leaving a previous job where she felt unsupported during her grief, she’s found a healthier balance at Caliber.

“I don’t prioritize work over everything anymore,” says Rikki. “If I have a bad day, I take the time I need. Caliber has been amazing, especially for work-life balance. My boss and director are incredibly understanding.”

Her advice to others struggling with mental health? “Don’t be afraid to speak up. It might take time to find the right doctor or therapist, but don’t give up. It’s okay to say no. Tomorrow is a new day, and the good days are worth the bad ones.”

Rikki’s journey is a testament to the importance of mental health, especially in the workplace. We’re grateful to have her on our team and inspired by her courage to share her story.