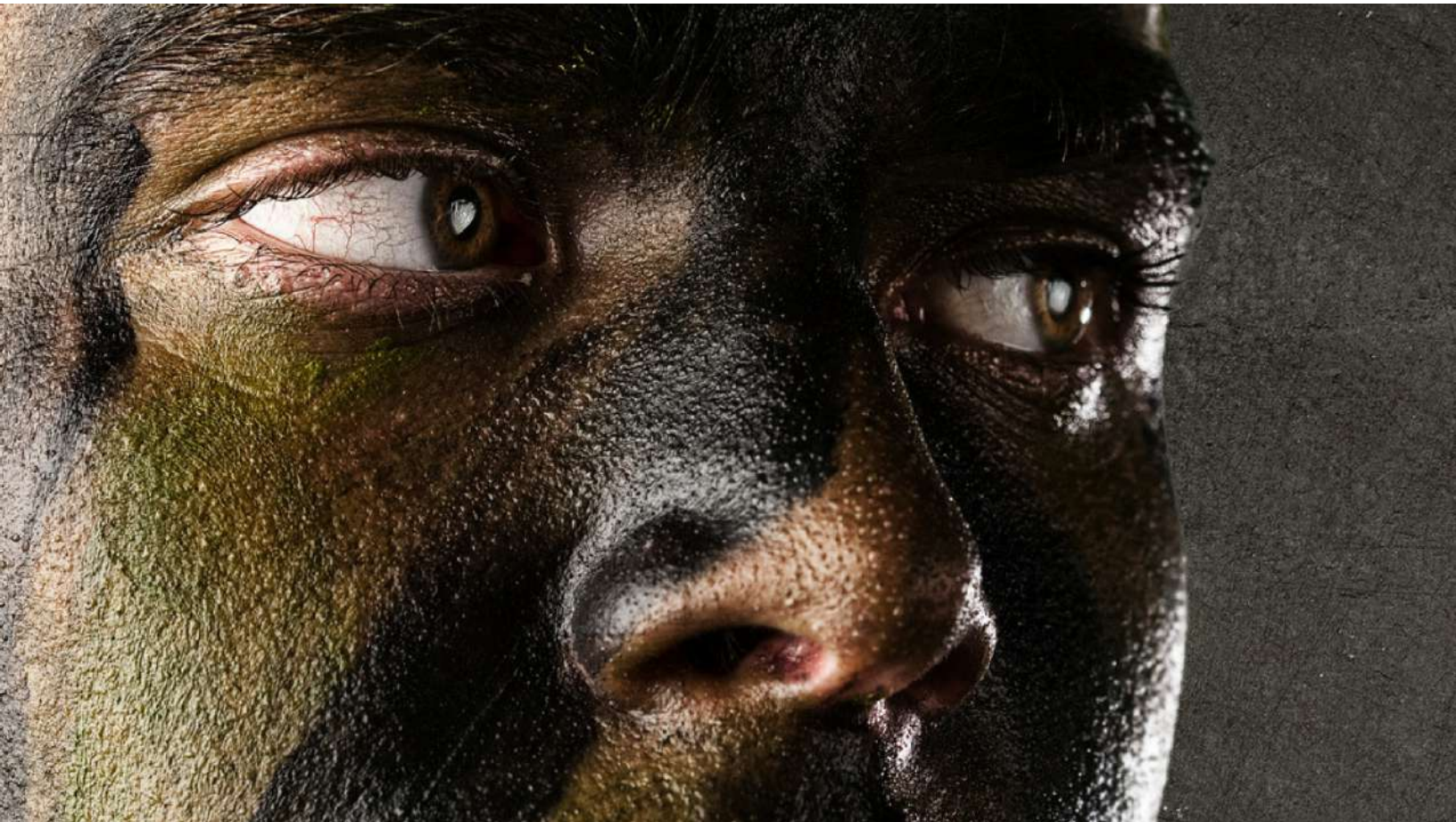


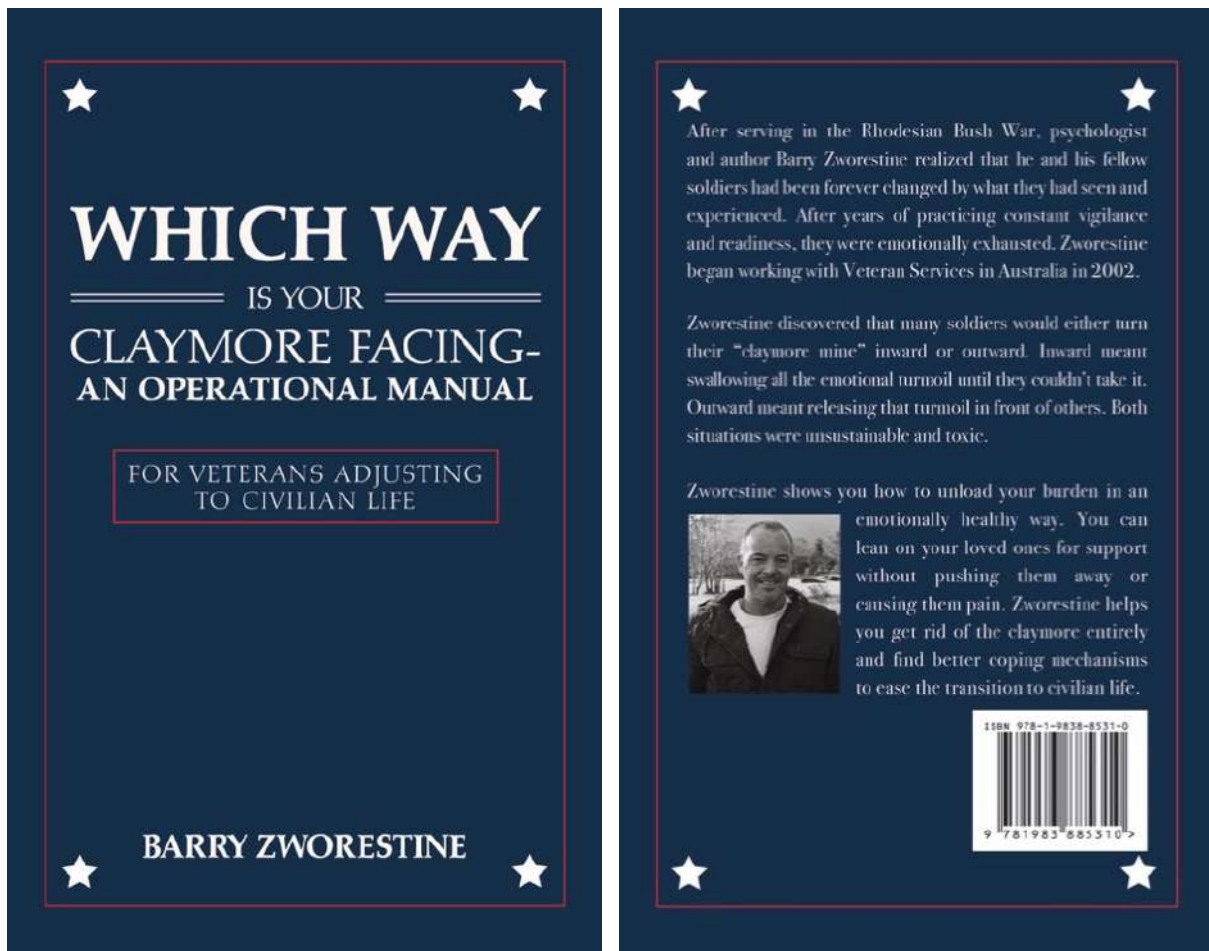
WHICH WAY IS YOUR WARRIOR FACING?

*An operational manual for current serving and veterans
transitioning into civilian life*



- Barry Zworestine -

My first book “Which Way is Your Claymore Facing – An Operational Manual for Veterans Adjusting to Civilian Life” was initially written to support those from my own war in the mid 1970’s. It was and still is available both as a book and Kindle on Amazon. However, increasingly I became aware of the need to focus more on the challenges around transitioning and extend the book to become more relevant to the present challenges. I also wanted to create a free resource for all. From this was born “Which Way is Your Warrior Facing”. It is far more dynamic, creative and I hope engaging and inspiring. Included in this is also my first book. Thank you for taking the time to journey through the book.



BOOK REVIEWS FOR “WHICH WAY IS YOUR CLAYMORE FACING – An Operational Manual for Veterans adjusting to Civilian Life”

1) Book Review - Soldiers Heart USA

The book arrived and was slowly eaten and digested on my recent trip to visit family. Thank you very much for the copy. I thoroughly enjoyed the military jargon and it helped me understand their world much more intimately. While I was there, I had an Iraq war vet take it home to share with his wife and so my beautifully marked up, gently used copy is currently in his possession. Recently, I have referred your book to a few people that have reached out to us here at Soldier's Heart. I am truly grateful for all the wonderful people like yourself who are so articulate and compassionate about this work with our veteran community.

2) Book Review - Rob Mackenzie (MBE, FRGS) - Rhodesian SAS

Barry was introduced to me by the SAS in November 2017. He has written a short book which is written in such a way so as to help both veterans and their family. It is both very clear and constructive. His website is also very helpful. I am sure that he will be a huge asset to the forces in Britain. It is wonderful that he is so willing to help so many. I think this book will be a blessing with regard to supporting individuals and families.

3) Book review - Katherine McNally-Psychologist

Hi Barry! I just bought and read your book. What a GEM! I have re-posted it on my blog, I am forwarding it to clients, friends and family alike. I love your clear, concise and straightforward way of laying out the goal in small bites. Bravo! And Thank You! I have been a follower of Don Michenbaum with regard to working with Veterans, obviously I also use Brainspotting with them as well. This is a new, and I promise, often-to-be used tool in my arsenal against PTSD.

4) Book Review - Returned and Services League of Australia- Western Australian Branch

This is such a gem. Amazing. An incredible tool for veterans, those who love them, and those who care for them. It is clear, concise, straightforward. And full of heart.

As a therapist who works with veterans and their families, I am grateful to have been introduced to this book and I will be sharing it far and wide.

5) Book Review - Ryan Page, ABET, RAN

'Which way is your claymore facing' is a lifeline for veterans of all creeds to grab a hold of in need. Many won't realize they have a problem until they see how well Barry breaks down tendency's soldiers carry with them everywhere and every day.

Barry has meticulously put this book together with absolute lean mechanisms symbolizing a soldier, sailor or airman preparing their kit to go forward into battle. His historic background as a psychologist is evident as re-reading his WARRIOR acronym has a profound effect on soothing anxiety time after time.

In summary, 'Which way is your claymore facing' is an effective and well put together self-help short novel drawing on personal examples from someone who has shared the same experiences. It is relatable to all service members that have completed basic training, which is why I believe anyone with a service background would benefit from it.

6) Book review - Stephanie Richmond - Founder and CEO of Stand Beside Them

Hi Barry,

I had the pleasure to receive your book the other day and have loved perusing all of the vital topics you touch on. It's wonderful to see your use of the military lingo in this sort of operational manual for transition. I can see how it will appeal to many veterans struggling in their newfound civilian roles and how it can help professionals communicate and understand veterans. Your use of neuroscience to help veterans understand why they feel the way they do is impressive, and I hope many veterans take advantage of this helpful manual!

I'm glad to add information about this book and about you on Stand Beside Them's website under our resource list so the veterans we impact can utilize this resource.

Thank you for your service. I hope you continue sharing your experiences and helping those who are continuing to transition.

7) Book Review - Joe Lara-Sr. Director of Programs at The Honor Foundation, U.S.A

In working with numerous transitioning veterans in the Special Operations community, there are common themes - fear of loss, lack of community (the brotherhood), cultural shifts, etc. Barry Zworestine helps the reader unpack some of the "inner stuff" that is sometimes not addressed when transitioning alone or without a plan. An excellent read offering relevant models to help a vet (or coach of a vet) address the emotional side of transition. Some veterans do not transition well. This can then lead to depression and poor decision making. Barry's deep concern and passion for veterans has enabled him to write a piece of work that could potentially save lives - NO exaggeration! Grateful for Barry and his insight!

8) Book Review - Major C and 2IC current serving ADF

This great little book took me all of one night to read. As a veteran, I found the directness and language of this book perfect in helping other veterans and those still serving get 'the wisdom'. Barry's approach doesn't only apply to veterans entering the civilian world, but those still serving making changes in their career, and even civilians with similar pressures. Barry's book will expose you to the idea of processing your experiences in a balanced and aware way. He explains the neuroscience of stress in a direct and easy to process way. Ultimately, there is a great positive thread of hope and empowerment the runs through this book - I can't recommend it enough.

9) Book Review - Dr. Gene Coughlin *(a decorated combat veteran that proudly served his nation as an Infantry Weapons Officer in the United States Marine Corps for over 20 years. Since retiring from military service in 2007, Dr. Coughlin has held senior management and director positions at multiple Fortune 500 companies (AECOM, SAIC) and The American Red Cross).*

"Hello Barry. I just finished your book. This is the story of my life and this is most important reading I have done in years. I will be recommending this book to all of my veteran friends. Well done my friend".

10) Book Review - Joseph Barnard (USA SOF Lt Col Retired)

Wow Barry, really well done. Using infantry terminology was genius. I look forward to promoting. So many good nuggets to help in transition.

DISCLAIMER

This book is to help support your personal growth and transformation. It should in no way be taken or used as a substitute for appropriate professional assistance such as assessment, diagnosis, therapy, or medical support. How readers apply the information, insights, lessons, and tools in this book is their personal choice, and by exercising this choice, readers assume full responsibility for their own interpretations, understandings, and impact of the information. The author assumes no responsibility for the choices or actions of the reader.

Copyright © 2019 Barry Zworestine. All rights reserved. No parts of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner without written permission from the author.

“You should not be leaving your Warrior behind as you transition into Civilian life. Yes, you need to learn to adjust and adapt to civilian territory but the core values of the Warrior and the wisdom gained from the military not only will inform and guide the civilian part of you but will make you a better Man or Woman. Who you were can and should become a part of who you are now. It should not be about getting stuck in the past but allowing the past to inform your present”.

Barry Zworestine

To my wife, Cristina

With great thanks, care, love, and respect for everything you have brought to my life; without you, this book never would have happened. Your editing and layout skills as well as your patience, enthusiasm and support for my vision and service to the Veteran community have helped co-create this project. It was worth the long reconnaissance to find you.

To my children, Seth, Liam, and Caitlin

Each of you is a truly fine warrior. You and your journeys are inspiring and have enriched my life—thank you, and my deep love goes to each of you.

To all the Veterans

I have had the privilege of meeting and sitting with in my practice—as much as I may have supported you, you have also enriched my life and made me a better man.

“Becoming fully who you are is also about being willing to let go of parts of who you were”.

Barry Zworestine

BE WARNED

Read this carefully.

*You must obey these rules from Sunday,
22nd August, 1976, until you are told
otherwise.*

THINGS YOU MUST DO:

1. Finish cooking your food before sunset.
2. You must remember the curfew and stay in your kraals at night.
3. You must stay in your kraal until day (noon) 12 o'clock.
4. Keep your livestock in the kraal until 12 o'clock.
5. Water your livestock between sunset and sunrise. Get your livestock back in the kraal before sunset.
6. Dogs must be kept tied up in kraals until 12 o'clock.

THINGS YOU CAN'T DO:

1. Do not make any fires at night.
2. Do not brew any beer.
3. Do not go outside your kraal by day or night.
4. Do not allow your children to go outside your kraal by day or night. Herding must be done by adults.
5. Do not allow your children to go outside your kraal by day or night. Herding must be done by adults.
6. Dipping of cattle has been stopped. No dipping.

Warning

1. If you see Security Forces do not run away. If you run away we will think you are a gandanga and we will shoot.
2. If you move outside your kraal after 12 noon you will be thought to be a gandanga and shot.
3. Drivers of vehicles that do not stop when ordered to do so by Security Forces will be thought of as gandangas and will be shot.

THIS ORDER BY COMMAND OF SECURITY FORCES.



TRANSITIONING TO CIVILIAN TERRITORY – THE NEXT OPERATIONAL FRONT

So, you may be considering transitioning out the military or in the process of transitioning or you may now be working out how to operate in civilian territory. You may have already worked out that calling in an airstrike, setting up a complex operation or being responsible for millions of dollars of equipment and other men's lives, does not exactly score up your desirability factor. You've probably noticed that the Military does not have any detailed maps of Civilian territory either!

Successful transitions rest not just on the ability to adjust your strengths to present challenges. These can face you with a difference in fit between where you were and where you currently are. To hold on to the past too tightly will restrict your capacity to open to your present. Every step of the journey will require adaptation and flexibility. Change can be challenging. Your power lies in how you receive and perceive what is facing you. Becoming fully who you are is also about being willing to let's go of parts of who you were.

It's your attitude not your situation that determines how you progress forward. Before you enter into change, take time to regroup and assess and identify the challenges ahead of you. Allow time for preparation at all levels- physically, psychologically and emotionally. When you finally commit to moving forward do so with focus and determination. Be flexible and willing to adjust and adapt as required. Your belief in yourself needs to be clear. When you finally commit to moving forward do so with focus and determination. Identify and release anything holding you back or to the past.

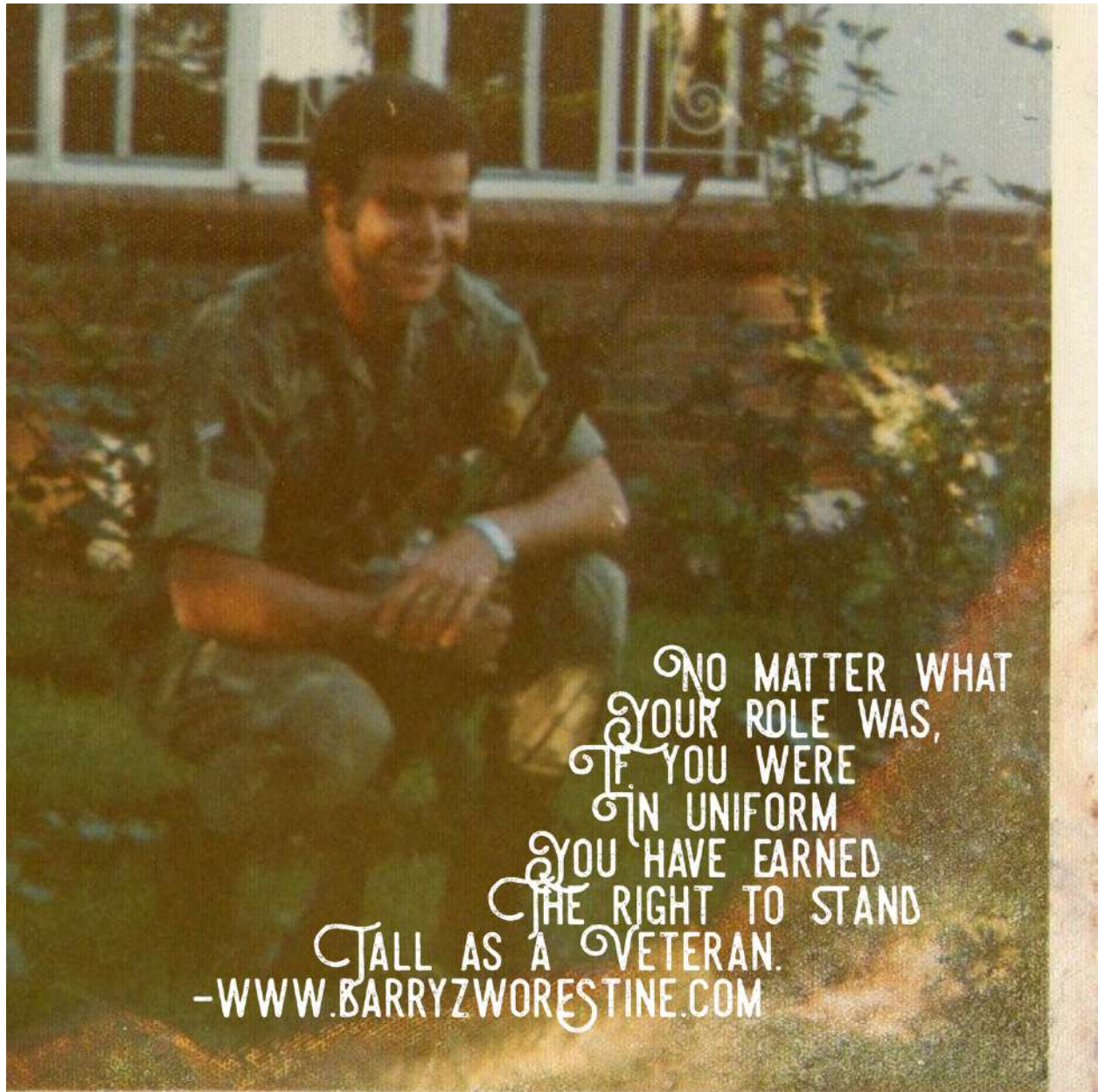
Remember: ATTITUDE determines ALTITUDE!

To successfully transition between thinking change and successfully doing change, your Intention needs to be clear and completely focused on the end goal. Intention fuels the ability to maintain movement in the face of adversity. It fuels your drive to settle for nothing less than what you desire. It sustains you in moments of doubt and despair and keeps you moving through the long dark night. Without the ferocity of intention, the fires of change burn low.

Increasingly over the years I have been working with Veterans and current serving, the need to address the complex layers of transitioning out of the Military has

become critical. Debriefs prior to discharge and even many current modalities or understandings around transition fail to grasp and address the potential complexity impacting on Men and Women as they begin to think about and work towards leaving the Military.

Over the years I have sat with highly capable and well-trained Warriors struggling to redefine themselves, find employment that meets their intelligence and recreate a sense of belonging and purpose.



NO MATTER WHAT
YOUR ROLE WAS,
IF YOU WERE
IN UNIFORM
YOU HAVE EARNED
THE RIGHT TO STAND
TALL AS A VETERAN.
-WWW.BARRYZWORESTINE.COM

Let's begin with a self-reflective exercise as this will form the foundational awareness and internal and relational map for you to progress forward with.

Here's a bit of a self-reflective exercise. Before beginning this journey with me, take time to reflect on the questions below: what I call the warrior acronym. If it works for you, then make a few notes on the insights, challenges, thoughts, and feelings that arise for you.

W – What is your will to change?

A – What is your ability like to adjust and adapt?

R – What is your respect for others and yourself like?

R – What is your responsibility to yourself like?

I – What is your integrity like?

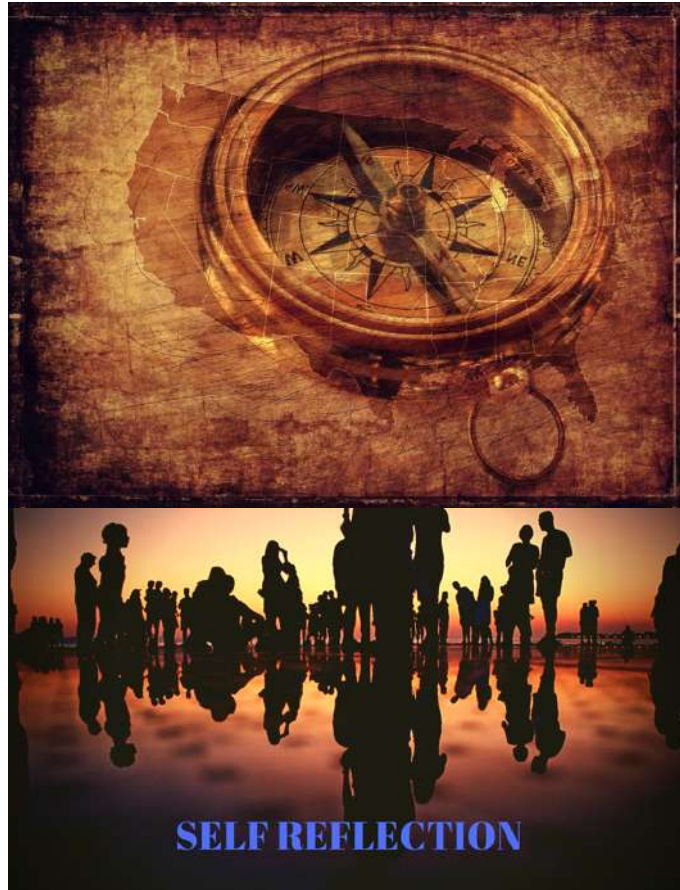
O – How observant rather than reactive are you?

R – How willing are you to attempt to repair negative relationships with others and yourself?

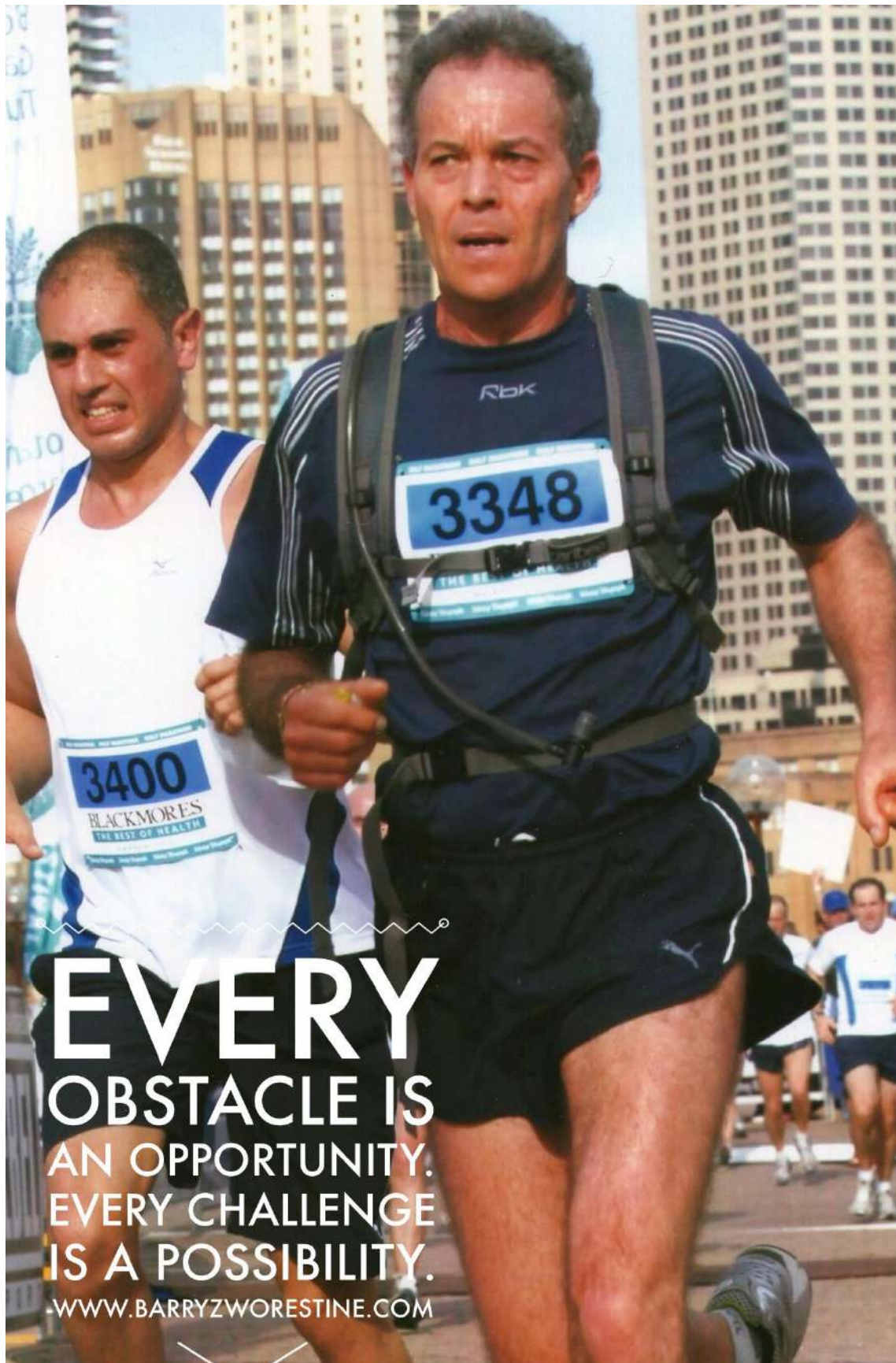
What may help you begin this journey is to create a map of your territory. Divide a page into three columns. The first column will represent territory you are very familiar with and resolved about working on. These are areas you have targeted and dealt with. The second column you could label "Work in progress." This column would identify things that you are currently working on that are still on the way to being resolved. These could be personal fitness and lifestyle balance, stress, or relationships. You may be dealing with these alone or with appropriate support. You could keep a track of your consistency, commitment, and efforts and note what is working and what is getting in the way. This book can possibly support you as you navigate through this territory. In time, you'll move some of these column two items to column one once you've resolved them.

Finally, column three contains the "big ones"—the things you don't want to approach for whatever reason. Examples of these could be alcohol use or traumatic memories. This bit of territory is unlikely to be resolved by your own effort (or, for that matter, this book). You will more than likely require professional support with this. As I noted earlier, avoidance is often a key issue here. The challenge, though, is that these areas will not just go away on their own. They can have a profound effect on your being

able to heal and progress. Creating your map can help direct you forward as you progress through this book.



The core challenge and requirement before undertaking change or transitioning to new territory, is to take time to Map out your journey and ensure that your internal compass is in good working order. I encourage you to take the time to think about the reflective questions that follow. Be honest with yourself and if it helps make a few notes.

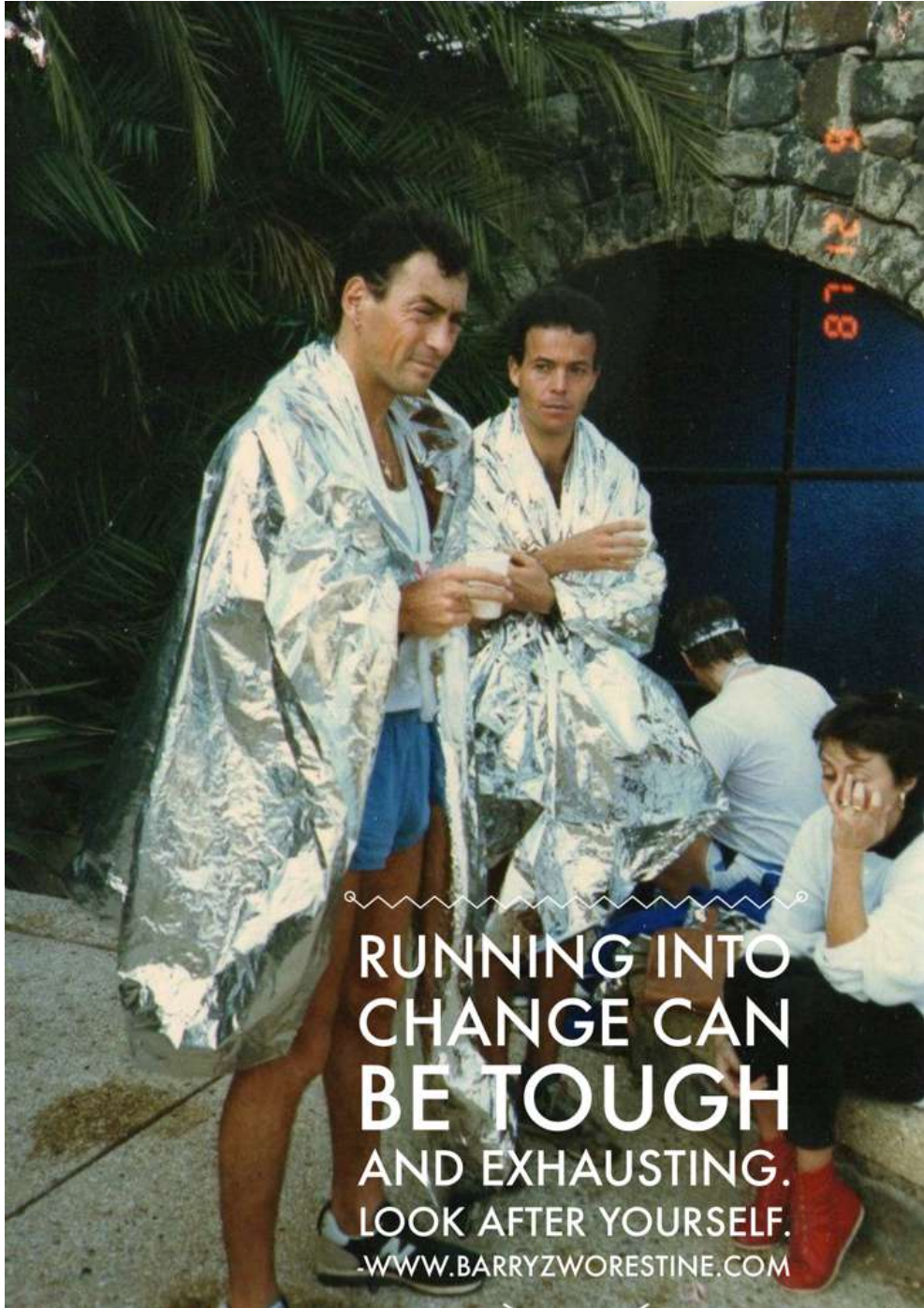


EVERY
OBSTACLE IS
AN OPPORTUNITY.
EVERY CHALLENGE
IS A POSSIBILITY.

WWW.BARRYZWORESTINE.COM

What is your WILL to change?

- 1) How serious are you about wanting to create change?
- 2) What can you identify inside yourself that could impact on you progressing forward?
- 3) What are the external factors around you that could impact on you progressing forward?
- 4) In what way is your goal aligned with your core values? Are there any tensions or contradictions that you need to be aware of?
- 5) What are the costs (to yourself and others around you) in creating this change?
- 6) What are you willing to do to deal with the costs and how would this look?
- 7) What are you currently tolerating that requires changing in order for you to progress forward?
- 8) What is the strength of your intent to create this change?
- 9) In the past how has the strength of your Will endured in the face of adversity?

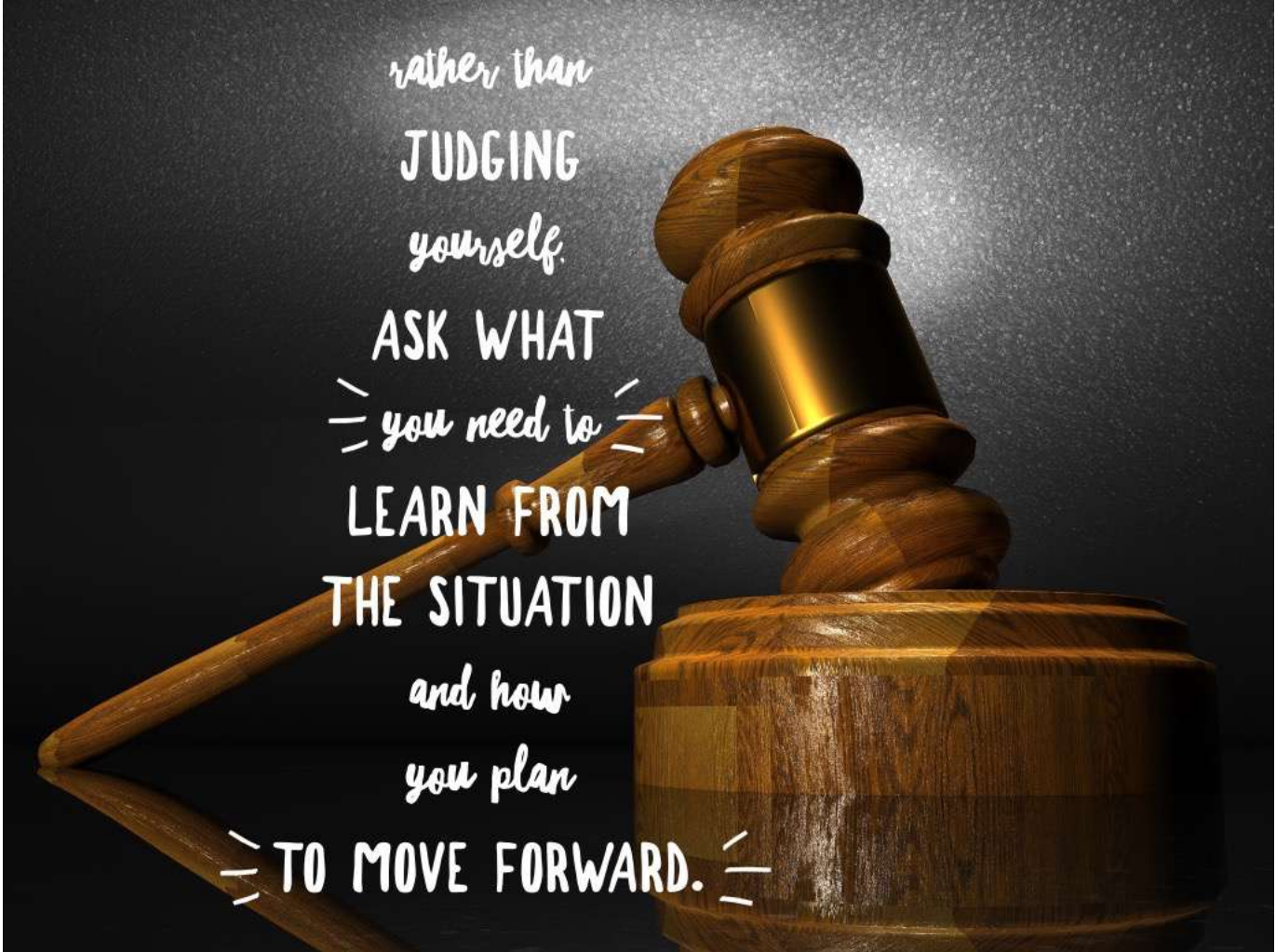


~~~~~  
**RUNNING INTO  
CHANGE CAN  
BE TOUGH  
AND EXHAUSTING.  
LOOK AFTER YOURSELF.**  
-WWW.BARRYZWORESTINE.COM



## What is your ability like to ADJUST and ADAPT

- 1) What are the factors, challenges and situations that you may need to adjust and adapt to?
- 2) What are your strengths and habits that you can draw on from where you currently are and who you are?
- 3) In what ways could these impact on you?
- 4) What would you need to put in place to ensure effective adaptation?
- 5) What would be the first three challenges facing you?
- 6) What would you do as the first step in progressing towards and meeting your goal?
- 7) How do you plan on sustaining a positive and constructive forward momentum?
- 8) How do you cope when frustrated or angry with others and situations?
- 9) What would you need to work on that could impact negatively on your transition to Civilian life?
- 10) What can you identify within yourself that can impede your ability to progress forward effectively and flexibly?



## What is your RESPECT like for others and yourself?

- 1) Identify your core strengths?
- 2) What could impact on you adjusting to civilian mindsets both personally and professionally?
- 3) What may your challenges be in adapting to others who do not hold the same or conflicting values?
- 4) List qualities you value in Civilians?
- 5) List qualities that frustrate you with Civilians?
- 6) What do you feel you would be losing in your transition from Warrior to Civilian?
- 7) Why would you be losing these?
- 8) In what ways could you reclaim this?
- 9) List your personal qualities that could negatively impact on others in the process-impatience, intolerance etc.
- 10) What are you willing to do to understand and resolve these issues?





— if you really —

WANT CHANGE,

STEP

out your

“comfort”

ZONE AND

— grab it —

—[www.barryzworistine.com](http://www.barryzworistine.com)

## What is your RESPONSIBILITY to yourself like?

- 1) What can you identify that will support you to self-care and effectively pace yourself?
- 2) What are you currently tending to neglect with regard to self-care and well-being?
- 3) What can you put in place to resolve this?
- 4) What aspects of your Warrior may impact on your ability to pace yourself - remember transitioning to Civilian life, although sharing many qualities of the challenges you have faced in the Military, need not become a personal "Hell Week"
- 5) What external challenges may impact on you being able to remain coherent and motivated? Remember, Civilian life and those in it are not necessarily going to treat you any differently because of your status and skill as a Warrior



**YOU ALONE ARE RESPONSIBLE  
FOR RECLAIMING YOUR POWER.**

## What is your INTEGRITY like?

- 1) What are your core values and habits?
- 2) What are the core values and habits that you expect from Civilians? And are these realistic?
- 3) What are you currently not respecting about yourself right now?
- 4) How do you cope with those that hold values that conflict with yours?
- 5) What do you need to identify within yourself and learn from to adjust your behaviors towards others?
- 6) What comes up for you when you think about being just another person in the job competition line up?
- 7) What thoughts and feelings come up with regard to the possibility that your background, skill set, and experience may not be sufficient to define who you now need to be and adjust to?

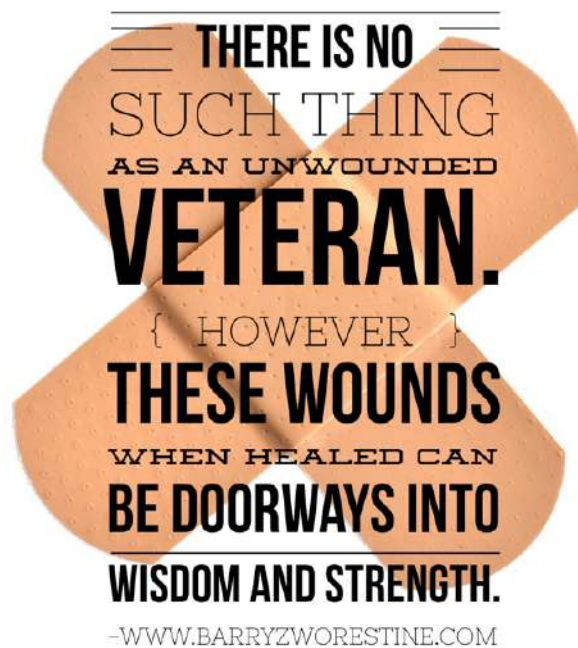


**TO BE MORE  
EFFECTIVE  
YOU MAY AT  
TIMES NEED  
TO SHIFT THE  
WAY YOU  
VIEW YOUR  
ARC OF FIRE**

**-WWW.BARRYZWORESTINE.COM**

## How OBSERVANT rather than reactive are you

- 1) How do you react to situations that do not meet your expectations?
- 2) How do you react to others that do not meet your expectations?
- 3) What do you need to identify in order to manage these situations and others more effectively?
- 4) In the past, how have you behaved in non-military environments?
- 5) Can you list any behaviors that have negatively impacted on your personal non-military relationship (friends, wife, siblings, children)?
- 6) What do you plan to do to resolve these issues to ensure your ability to observe and communicate rather than react?





## Are you willing to attempt to REPAIR negative relationships with others and yourself?

- 1) In your transition to Civilian life, what are possible factors that could trigger you?
- 2) How have you reacted in the past when in similar territory?
- 3) What will be challenging for you to adjust and adapt to?
- 4) What do you feel you can do to manage yourself?
- 5) What might you require support and mentoring for?
- 6) Who can you identify that can support you with this?
- 7) If necessary, are you willing to get support? If not, why not?
- 8) What current relationships are you needing to repair?
- 9) Can you identify your 50% that maintains the issue? Can you list these?

**YOU DID IRAQ.**

---

**NOW YOU CAN DO CIVILIAN.**

---

**-WWW.BARRYZWORESTINE.COM**

---



## THE MILITARY versus THE CIVILIAN BRAIN

There are roughly two modes in which the military brain will operate - Ambush (alert, aggressive, reactive) or OP (calm, observing).

In the Veteran Brain unlike the civilian brain, there is a flow through between the two territories in that even under situations of extreme threat and reaction there is the ability to remain calm, aware and focused. This mode is perfectly designed and appropriate to operational functionality. The potential challenges only arise within the Civilian environment where that constant state of alert, hyper-vigilance and the behaviors that go with it (while driving, in restaurants, busy shopping centers and at home) can have a negative impact on both the veteran and those around him or her. It's like having an app constantly burning in the back of your brain.

Watch an animal eating quietly in the wild. Their constant watchful alertness and body tension is no different to the veteran—even in moments of apparent relaxation. This state is even more challenging for those currently serving and moving between the two territories of being on operations and time out at home. Remember that the military brain does not change or adjust to a transition to civilian territory. It maintains the same wiring. For the military brain, civilian territory is just another operational zone but potentially more complex and hazardous because focused reactivity is not an option. There is often little understanding of this in the civilian world where there is an expectation that a change of uniform should equal a change in brain. It is therefore not surprising that veterans walk into so many ambushes on arriving in or returning to civilian worlds. It is tragic that this lack of understanding can lead to pathologizing highly adaptable and trained behavior.

Yes, there needs to be adjustments and adaptations on both sides but to label the individual is a major concern. On the part of the Veteran or current serving—learning new job skills is essential but these will not rewire the brain. Where appropriate, help is often required to create a more adaptable wiring to navigate effectively through the new territory. The brain will not simply just change. Old wiring appropriate to one situation will not automatically rewire to the new situation. It will take time. It is critical that within the military that support is also given that allows the use of neuroscience and brain/ body-based modalities that begin the process of rewiring. This complex transition therefore takes time and is clearly the shared responsibility of all.



**Cammo up.  
Your Warrior will  
keep you strong.  
Do not loose this connection.  
Endurance, trust,  
focus and reliability  
remain your strengths.  
-[www.barryzworestine.com](http://www.barryzworestine.com)**

## LOSS OF TRIBE

Tribe is at the core of military life. It defines individuals through the close-knit connection to each other. Who "I" am, is an extension of who "WE" are. Shared meanings, values, language and experience allow a framework of connection.

In the Military Tribe we move from selfishness to selflessness. Core values- dependability, reliability and self-sacrifice - maintain connection and survivability. To so many Veterans, Civilian life is a random and unpredictable matrix the focuses more on the individual and the superficial rather than the collective. They understandably struggle to both understand how the territory operates as well as redefine who they are. They feel dislocated. However, despite these challenges we know that transition can be and is being successfully achieved and Tribe in a different way can be accomplished. But it requires coaching and mentoring and at times healing and counselling.



## INTEGRATING THE WARRIOR AND THE CIVILIAN

**Draw on your Warrior attributes. Remember that you were trained to excel.**

Excellence is defined by your willingness to exceed your perceived limitations. It is achieved by your acceptance and motivation to step out of your comfort zone. It is maintained by your capacity to process and transform the challenging and often stressful demands on you both physically, mentally and psychologically. It is not measured by ranking to others. This should not define or limit you. Every success is an invitation to become better. There are no failures, only opportunities to learn and improve. This is the mindset that will be needed along the transitional process.

The challenge in transitioning from Military to Civilian territory is to first identify your skill sets and strengths that can accompany you. It's not about leaving yourself behind. Assess the demands and challenges of this new territory. Consider the adjustments and adaptations that will be required. Identify new learning and new ways of operating that may not yet be within your circle of influence. Prepare and practice. Constantly reassess, re-evaluate and adjust. Teamwork is critical. At no point should your Warrior be left behind. This part of you forms the core of your values and strengths that can and will support you as you transition into Civilian life. The Wounds that you carry do not define the Warrior. Your work is to call back and integrate these parts of yourself no matter what it takes. You would have laid down your life to protect a brother. At all times your focus was not on yourself but on the safety and wellbeing of your group. Reliability and Dependability were your core values.

Transitioning into Civilian life is about maintaining those core values but also learning to direct them towards yourself. Whatever burdens you may be carrying, you need to be willing to acknowledge them and deal with them. You are as important as your Brothers around you. To successfully navigate through civilian territory, you will need to navigate through your own internal terrain. You've earned the right to carry yourself!





**How  
you progress  
forward will draw on  
your operational  
tracking skills.  
Eyes open and watch  
how you moved  
through  
your territory.  
-[www.barryzworestine.com](http://www.barryzworestine.com)**

## UNDERSTANDING AND OPERATING IN NEW TERRITORY

To heal and adjust from military to civilian life is about embracing the soldier and re-finding the warrior in the present and drawing on the positive aspects from the past: who you were and who you still are. Healing and adjusting to civilian life is about acknowledging grief, guilt, loss, and shame and respecting who you are. Combat need not be just the end of a good life but the beginning of an even better life firmly grounded in the wisdom, learning, and experience found in that place called war. I wish you well in your road ahead and that this book will be a positive part of your journey. Although the majority of veterans I have sat with in my practice have been men, I have tried to adopt a gender-neutral perspective, as this book applies to both female and male veterans.

To create change, consider whether you would be willing to move from the space where you are currently standing. No matter how stuck you may feel, it is important to believe and understand that you can begin to do a few small things. As veterans, you were trained to remain focused, no matter how challenging, complex, or seemingly hopeless (and at times life-threatening) the situation appeared. You never lost sight of the need to take care of your weapons. Like weapons, you also need a regular "pull-through," which I will get into later. (The glossary at the end of the book includes definitions of potentially unfamiliar military terms).

To clarify for those unfamiliar with the term "pull-through," this defines the action of pulling an oily rag through the barrel of a rifle in order to clean it. This pull-through may be a focus on your well-being, both internally and externally/physically: Do you exercise, is your weight a problem, what is your eating like, what is your sleep like, do you smoke or use alcohol? Too many veterans I have seen have had a tendency to neglect their well-being as they dive into unhealthy eating patterns and tobacco and alcohol use in an attempt to numb the pain and the grief. This is a recipe for a stoppage (when a weapon fails to fire, often as a result of it not being cleaned). It is initially far easier to work on setting healthier life-balance goals than to begin with the more complex trauma issues.

Another factor is your attitude that you will bring to changing. Are you willing to do what it takes to recover? Are you willing to learn strategies to enjoy a more balanced relationship with your partner and children? If you are reading this book, then I would ask that part of your agreement now with yourself will be that you are worth investing in. No matter how out of control you have experienced your behavior towards yourself and others, no matter how deep your depression may have been at times (and may



still be), no matter how exhausting you experience surviving each day to be, I'd like you to remember that you are still, and always will be, a warrior. Without exception, every warrior I have sat with has embodied trust, loyalty, dependability, and reliability. Very few have travelled your road. Your present circumstances do not define who you are.

This book is a result of the collaboration between veterans and myself as we shared conversations over the years. It encapsulates the core insights, lessons, and tools that have emerged between us during that time. This book is the result of many years of my finding the effective balance between the two parts of myself—psychologist and veteran—and discovering that both, working together, benefitted those I sat with. I'd like to invite you to walk with me as you move through the book. Be discriminating and see what resonates and works for you. Try stuff out, give things a go, and I look forward to hearing from you.



## MAPPING OUT YOUR CIVILIAN TERRITORY

Understanding the complex aspects of learning to effectively operate in Civilian territory supports the process of transitioning the best of who you are and allows effective adaptation and adjustment. Take time to explore all aspects of potential transitional territory. These may include reintegrating back full time into your family, your professional and personal goals, job hunting, retraining etc. The more you map out your territory, including your strengths as well as areas of deficit, the more successful you will be. No goal can be achieved without prior preparation and rehearsal.



## THE SPACE BETWEEN LEAVING AND ARRIVING

You learnt to operate in the military. Remember that you were initially challenged to adjust to a more regimented life. You had to take on and learn new skills. You had to re-form a new identity. All these skills apply to transitioning to civilian life. However, this time round you have the core attributes and values of the Warrior to drive you forward. There will be challenges as you adjust, adapt and form your new identity. Take your time. Maintain coms with those that can support you. Build a map to help you navigate. Maintain situational awareness and when in doubt go OP to observe your new territory.

Everything you need to have to adjust is already within you. You would place your life on the line for another. Yet so many veterans tend to leave themselves behind when transitioning into civilian territory. You are under the same obligation to bring yourself back. Your trauma or your struggles are no different from others wounds. They deserve attention, support and care. The attributes that form who you are apply to yourself as well. Do whatever it takes. Go back. Give yourself a hand. Allow others to walk with you and return.

How you transition into civilian life will be determined by your ability to track your progress- your wellbeing, mental state, impact on others and use of pull through tools. If you ignore the tracks, you make you could be heading into your own ambush. At regular intervals, stop and think about how you are doing. This is no different to your operational skills set. Remember that the territory between leaving and arriving can take time. The civilian world is not necessarily waiting to welcome you with open arms. Your rank and experience may have little currency value in your new life. Reforming yourself may be well out of your circle of understanding. Be willing to ask for help, whether it be a coach, mentor, councilor etc. Be ready to learn new skills and adapt and adjust those you already have.





THERE CAN  
**BE NO**  
HEALING

*with*

**A CLOSED**

*heart.*

— [www.barryzuonestine.com](http://www.barryzuonestine.com) —

## MORAL INJURIES

Increasingly, numbers of Veterans I have seen, have shared the traumatic impact of being removed from their Unit/Tribe and rapidly transitioned out of the military as a result of injuries or bullying and discrimination. These can and do have a very traumatic impact and need to be dealt with. They can erode your sense of Self as well as feeling competent as Warrior.

The Warrior journey is thousands of years old. Inherent in it and critical to it at the core is the hunting of and killing of others and the willingness to do this - the Noble Savage. What is the meaning of violence in this territory? It is the skill and capacity to focus and direct lethal aggression. In the context of this territory, this is neither distorted or abnormal. Warriors have an intimate relationship with death and as a result an appreciation of life. However, in the context of civilian territory, values and judgements are placed on these skills, mindsets and individuals.

Ignorance based on a vision that fails to see the importance of creating rituals to welcome our Warriors back results in a culture that judges, labels and distorts. Homelessness, suicide, disconnection and despair are to an extent a reflection of the battleground within the home territory that they return to. What currently exists to bridge the return is far from satisfactory. There is a dire need to step back and out of our models of management and see, truly see and welcome these individuals and value them for their strength and wisdom.

*No Warrior should ever return home to die!*



## PTSD/ TBI

These are not within the parameters of this eBook. However, it is something that if left untracked, can profoundly impact on your transition process. Talk to a professional if you feel you may have any impacts from operations. Watch your alcohol use, sleep, mood, diet etc.



— hug your veteran —  
mate today.

IT'LL MAKE YOU  
both feel good.

—[www.barryzwoestine.com](http://www.barryzwoestine.com)

## RELATIONSHIPS

How many partners of Veterans note that their husbands or wives seem to have a more intimate connection within their Military Tribe than within the family. Tribe in Civilian life may be spelt the same but in every other way it is completely different for those who have served. For them Tribe can be based on unconditional support through adversity and suffering. It is a deep bond forged through the military ritual of being broken down and reformed. It is about the shared memories of Operations, often unspoken but deeply etched into the marrows of the bones. This bond is not something that can be easily grasped or understood by Civilians. If not spoken about it can erode the foundation of connection with partners.

For this reason, I wrote "The Letter" which is in my book. I include it at the end.





## EMOTIONS

All your training has rewired you to manage potentially traumatic experiences but remain coherent. You have the ability to damp down on your feelings. Many Veterans I have sat with have confirmed an experience of having a more muted emotional cycle. It's not that they don't feel. It's not that they don't feel deeply connected to and responsible for those they care and love and it's not that they don't grieve losses. However, the expression of this is different.

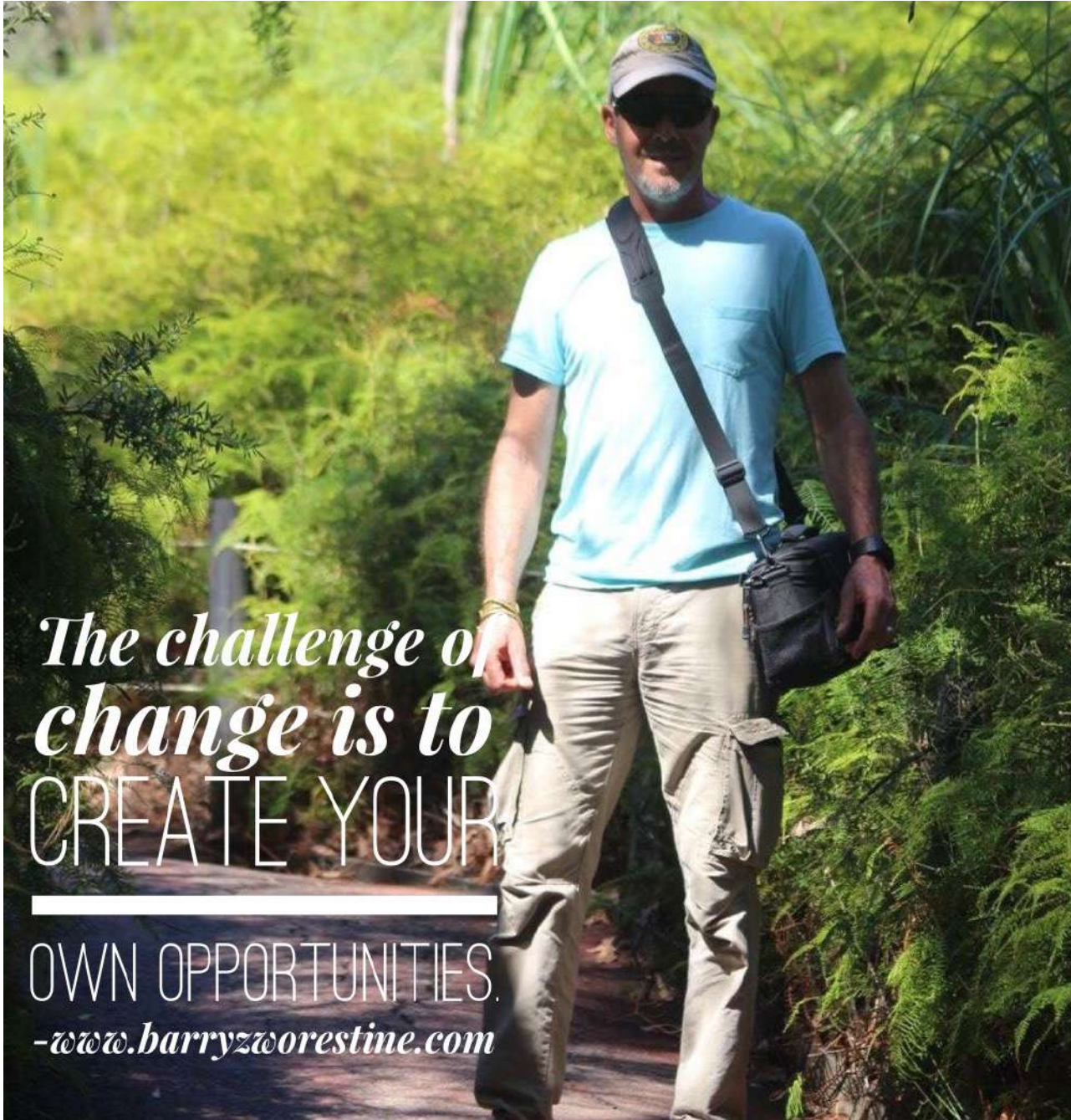
Over the years, I have done many debriefs with partners and families around this. Veterans I have sat with over many years describe cycles of, at times for no apparent reason, of just feeling edgy and uncomfortable. In these moments being with others can feel overwhelming and irritating. Often trying to work out why can be a futile exercise. There are many boxes that can account for this feeling- the loss of military tribe, stretching into and adjusting to civilian life, the edges of traumatic memory,



grief and pain making its way to the surface of your awareness, present day challenges, ageing and the loss of capability- these are just a few.

Try doing the following when you are aware of these feelings- begin by just respecting the energy in your body. Bring your awareness to it. Feel what comes up. Open your heart. Let the tension, edginess and irritation in your body move- stretch, breath, exercise, yoga are some of the body based modalities you can use. Just let it move. Accept its presence. What do you need? - time out, some solitary space? Communicate your needs so others don't take it personally. Don't judge your experience. Quiet your internal chatter and just listen to your body. My sense over the years is that as Veterans we carry an app that takes that little bit more energy than others- if not attended to it can drain resources. Imagining the impact of constant hyper vigilance on the body? Begin with your body first. See how you go.

In over 15 years of working with Veterans the one experience that I have consistently witnessed is the profound depth of their grief. It has always moved me to see these extraordinary Warriors pay tribute to brothers lost or the loss of parts of themselves over time on operations. Grief ignored numbs the heart, stills the capacity to feel and fires up anger. When a Warrior is willing and ready to feel, to remember and to grieve, only then do the doorways to his heart open and bring the beginning of peace and resolution. It is through feeling and grieving that the shadows of those lost are brought to life and affirmed. It is this moment where the aching heart is allowed to be that a Warrior can stand tall by the fallen and listen and remember.



*The challenge of  
change is to*  
CREATE YOUR

---

OWN OPPORTUNITIES.

*-www.barryz@orestine.com*

Finally try reflecting on the SEAL approach as you consider or are working with transitioning:

**SUCCESS:** define and visualize your goals- what it looks like and feels like. Identify your strengths and operationalize how you will use these to attain success. Identify your potential weak links and challenges in the transition process. Define what you plan to do to resolve these.

**EXTEND:** be willing to move out and stretch beyond your area of comfort, learn new skill sets, start again.

**ADJUST and ADAPT:** stay flexible in the process. Release what does not work anymore in this new territory. Explore your territory and gain knowledge.

**LEARN:** consolidate all the above. Become better at who you already are. Understand the new mindset and the way civilian territory and relationships within it work. The challenge of change is to create your own opportunities.

*I wish you all a successful transition process. You are already everything that you need to be. Stand proud as a Warrior. The world needs more of your kind.*





## IF YOU ARE STUCK—DO A HANDSTAND

Clearly, I don't mean this literally, however as the photo shows, in 1973 I gave it a go on the edge of a stone bridge over a Creek. Well, I can't say that anything changed other than risking a few broken bones if I had lost balance. But 44 years later the following insights came to me as I re-looked at the photo:

To create change to need to shift your mindset. As you think so you will be. If you are stuck, then you have two choices—go Victim and remain where you are or fully commit to do whatever it takes to move forwards. It's like being at the 64km mark of an ultra-marathon and every part of you is screaming to find a way to drop out. The thing is, that life is not going to come running up to you with a hug and a kiss and a bucket load of understanding. In life, if you choose not to dust off and get up, nobody can help you. So, begin with the correct attitude, even if that is a recognition that you are stuck and that you cannot shift your mindset or situation Be willing to ask for help. So now you are willing to consider shifting your attitude and be open to considering that you may be as much a part of the problem as you are a part of the solution.

Are you on the stage living the story and believing you are one of the characters or can you climb down, even if only for a brief moment, and sit in the audience and watch the show? Changing the place, you view and experience things from can be as powerful as doing a handstand on the edge of a creek. Somehow things can change when you get back on your feet. And yes, there is always a risk. As they say, no pain, no gain. How can you move forward if you are not willing to address, feel, understand and heal those wounds, grief, pain, anger or other Claymores that are locked away behind closed doors? Everything lives in your body. So, when your body whispers to you- "Listen to me, hear my grief, feel my sadness, understand my loss, care for my pain"—if you abandon the wisdom of your body, how can you expect others to do for you what you avoid doing. It's not easy feeling but see it as energy held and encapsulated from a long time ago. It cannot kill you. It can hurt but slowly moving through the tunnel of your past, and if necessary, with appropriate help and guidance, will eventually take you back into the light.

To you Veterans out there—it's simple—no pull through results in a stoppage. Are you willing to strip and clean your moving parts or are you choosing to run into a stoppage? There are many out there who are waiting to run with you, but there are very few if any out there who will drag you over the 84kms while to choose to sit by the side of the road.

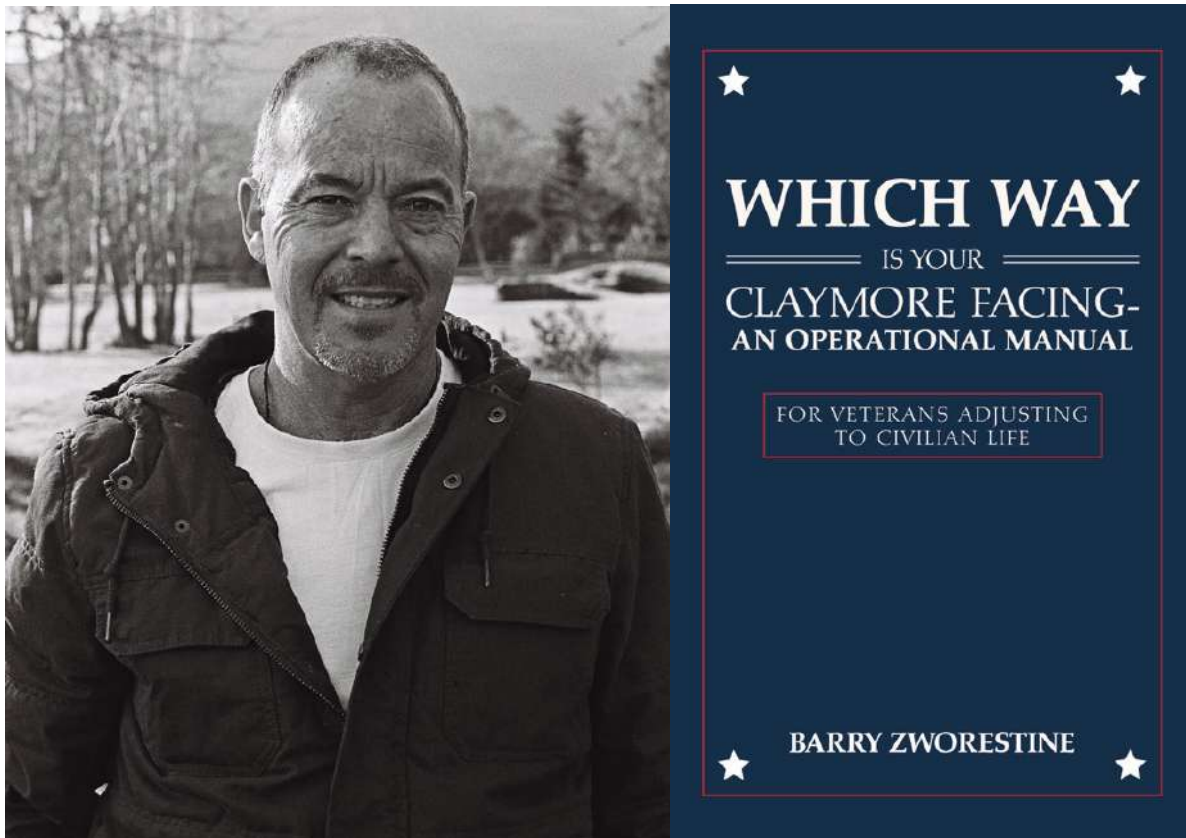


The Healing process is not simply a fluffy crystal laying, didgeridoo massaging, chanting session where you just lie back, and everyone does the work for you. Be great if we could experience change while remaining passive on the massage table. I see this in the drumming circles I have run over the years where there are Men and Women in their core and their power that hit the drum. And then there are those “fluffy men” sensitively stroking the drum skin.

Whether you are a Veteran, or a Civilian, a Man or a Woman, ask yourself the following questions- Is my Man in charge of my Boy or is my Boy in charge of my Man (for you Women out there, if you’ve connected with a Man who is soft, constantly in his emotional body, needy and reliant on you to organize his world-welcome to the Boy!). But then again, if your Girl is on top of your Woman-well, 5-year-old boys and girls are not really ready for the wonderful work of relationships or even moving responsibly into the World as self-sufficient adults. The next question for Men is that “Is your Masculine on top of your Feminine or the other way around?”. Remember we need both, as much as you Women need you Feminine on top of your Masculine. At times, we will draw on one or the other or both together but think about where you are in this balance.

We all have door to unlock and open rooms to clear-dusty, dark rooms with shapes lurking, snarling or sobbing in the corners through lifetimes of neglect. Start to pay attention to yourself-your sleeping, eating, exercise and drinking. Be honest with yourself. Avoidance is a ticket to a movie you would not be willing to pay to see.

## INTRODUCTION TO MY FIRST BOOK



I've sat down endless times to write this book, and time after time I've given up because it was simply easier for me to just keep working with veterans than to write. Around 2012 I began to make contact with a number of Rhodesian military groups on Facebook, since I am myself a veteran of the Rhodesian military. It soon became apparent that these veterans and their families had a real need for support. Through Skype, email, and from contributing articles and checklists to the various groups, I was able to support a number of soldiers and their partners around the world. Time restrictions soon made it clear, however, that it was not going to be possible to support more than a very limited number of people. From this was born the vision of writing this book so that as wide a range of veterans and their families (not just from the Rhodesian Bush War) could benefit from the insights, understandings, and strategies that I have used over the years. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the Rhodesian Bush war, the war began around 1964 and ended in 1979, after which the country transitioned to a new black-majority government under Zimbabwe-

Rhodesia. In 1980 the country was re-named Zimbabwe under Prime Minister Robert Mugabe.

Why the title of my first book “Which Way is Your Claymore Facing—an Operational Manual for Veterans Transitioning to Civilian Life”? What came to me was that, so often in times of transition (from military to civilian life) or with the impact of trauma, much of our behavior has the tendency to become self-destructive, either inwardly towards ourselves (alcohol, lifestyle, stress, depression) or outwardly towards others and the territory we occupy. The goal would be a constructive and positive movement towards relating to ourselves, others, and our world so that the presence of the “Claymore” of the title is no longer an option. (A Claymore mine, introduced for use by the US Army, is an aimable antipersonnel device that when detonated shoots metal balls into the kill zone of an ambush; the Claymore mine was named for the claymore, a two-handed sword used in medieval Scotland.) This book is not an academic or researched text. Nor is it a replacement for appropriate diagnosis and management. It’s a little book based on endless hours of sitting with men from the Australian military and the Rhodesian Bush War, from World War II through Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan.

It’s a book based on my own personal insights from being a combat veteran of the Rhodesian Bush War to the many messes and losses I faced during my own postwar journey. It’s based on my experiences of being witness to the veterans’ deep pain, loss, and grief and their depression, stress, anxiety, anger, and everyday struggles to adjust to the unpredictable complexities of civilian life. It’s based on the universal and timeless experience and shared comradeship of veterans gathering with veterans, no matter whether they come from special forces units or regular units. It’s based on the stories of veterans’ partners and children as they have desperately tried to find ways to understand and bridge the traumatic silence so typical of many veterans, as well as to deal with the war that returned home—the rage and reactivity, the alcohol and flashbacks. It’s based on the deep feelings of loss veterans have felt as they’ve tried to connect with those, they once knew but still love. It’s based on supporting veterans and their families to create a map and find a compass that will help them operate in the bewildering and unpredictable confusion of civilian life.

Finally, this book is based not just on the trust and insights that have emerged between myself and these remarkable people, not just on my own deepening of my skills in treating trauma, but also my personal journey of healing. As much as I have had an impact on those I have been privileged to speak with, they in turn have

enriched, affected, and left me a wiser and better man, veteran, father, friend, husband, and psychologist.

I have kept this book short and simple. I have drawn on operational lessons, principles, and military training and have linked these factors to create a map and resource that veterans can draw on when transitioning to civilian life. I have translated the brain and neuroscience to operational terms. Through this book I hope you will become clearer about how to move from an ambush mode to what I call an OP (observe, plan, think, and organize) mode. (An OP is also an observation post, where the terrain and those moving across it can be monitored without being visible.) You will learn tools and insights to choose which way your Claymore faces. You will find language to support you to communicate with your partner, friends, children, and family. You will find help in identifying tools to learn to do your pull-through, keep your personal “barrel” clean, and avoid stoppages. I will also share resources on my website from a number of approaches that the veterans I’ve worked with have found effective, especially in those tight situations where an immediate “cock, hook, and look” is needed. (This is an immediate action drill to assess and then clear a cartridge stuck in the breech of a weapon.)

There is no rocket science in anything I have written. I leave the academics for others. This is an on-the-ground, in-territory, dusty, sweaty, practical, short, and simple book. I do not suggest anything that I have not personally used and continue to use to this day. Take time, as you move through the book, to put it down once in a while and think about your commitment to your journey and to creating change. Think about some of the insights, understandings, and strategies and then commit to trying one or two things that may make sense to you. Draw on the support of others around you. Remember that a good patrol is determined by the knowledge of the map you carry, your internal compass (your values and judgement), the resources you equip yourself with to manage and survive, and, most important of all, the presence of others in your group. The rules remain the same—teamwork, knowledge, and the willingness to take the first step. I wish you well on this journey and hope that, along the way, you find the peace you deserve and the connections with others that are important to you in whatever territory you currently find yourself.

My website and this current book have a number of very practical tools that are freely available for you to try out. I personally continue to use these tools to this day and have seen the benefit they’ve had on those I’ve sat with in my practice. They are drawn from the work of a number of people and organizations. I wish to add that,

before using these tools, be sure to clear these tips with any professionals you are working with.

I would really like to stress that you may be recently out of operations, or forty years may have passed since you were on active duty. But it is never too late to get help in order to change and to heal.





## OPERATIONAL NEUROSCIENCE

One of the most valuable tools I use with veterans is in explaining how the brain and trauma work. Just as a map and compass and an awareness of the territory to be covered are critical to a successful patrol, so, too, is understanding the terrain of the brain. With this understanding, how you think, feel, and react will start to make more sense. The two operational areas I will focus on are the front and the back of the brain.

To keep things simple, we can understand the front part as the “smart” brain and the back as the “impulsive” brain. The front has the ability to think and reason and to make sure that when you set up your Claymore mine, it is facing outwards. It thinks, plans, and strategizes. The back is quite likely to set up an ambush, with the Claymore either facing inwards towards you or destructively outwards, towards those you care for. This is the part of the brain that immediately responds when things go wrong. It is continuously in action and with high states of hyper vigilance, in what is known in military lingo as being in contacts and using fire force. (A contact is the action of becoming engaged with the enemy, while fire force is the deployment of helicopters both to place troops on the ground in a contact and to engage from the air with weapons; the use of fire force as a military tactic was developed during the Rhodesian Bush War.)

Trauma results in significant overactivity in this part of the brain. The high levels of fear response activate symptoms of alertness, scanning, and anticipation of an attack. Under normal situations, blood flows from the back to the front. As long as this flow is regular, we have the capacity to think about what we are experiencing and plan an appropriate response. So, if we are in a restaurant in civilian life, we can understand that we are safe and that there is no need to scan and sit facing the door. But for vets with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and high levels of trauma, the brain is still at war, no matter how many years may have passed. The high levels of stress, depression, anxiety, and trauma kick up the levels of arousal in the back of the brain. As a result, the blood flow to the front of the brain decreases, which in simple terms is the equivalent of being on a patrol with no radio, map, or compass. We retreat and function at high levels of alertness in order to protect ourselves and others around us. So, with the back of your brain running its own show without the capacity to reason or think clearly, it's not surprising that we hit the dirt when a car backfires, we exhaustingly scan when we're in shopping centers, we

always need to face the doorway, and we react excessively and immediately and then have great difficulty recovering quickly.

I remember once in training, a soldier with a MAG (machine gun) had a “runaway gun,” where the weapon continues to fire on its own volition. At that point, he was in such a high state of fear that there was no longer any blood flow to the front of his brain, resulting in him beginning to turn around while still holding the runaway MAG. Many veterans arrive home with their brains still on operation mode, and as a result, even though the war may be long over or recently concluded, they continue to operate at home as if they were still on operations. As the soldiers had done on operations, their partners and children now live in high states of alertness, fear, and uncertainty at home because of the soldiers’ behavior. Their brains, remaining fully operational, leave the soldiers’ loved one feeling as if they were in the middle of a field of land mines scattered by their trauma and PTSD.

Whereas in operations and contacts we can react with aggression, these trained and wired-in behaviors at home and in civilian life can have disastrous effects on those we love. As a result, too many veterans turn to alcohol as a way to release, escape, and relax. But this is a form of R&R (rest and relaxation) that has no positive outcome. We become hostage to our own trauma, driven deeper and deeper into despair as we unsuccessfully attempt to navigate our way through the unpredictability’s of civilian territory. As one vet put it, “It was so much simpler in the military. I knew where I stood, I depended and trusted the men around me, and they in turn respected and trusted me. We were a family, a team. We stuck together.

Rank defined codes of conduct. In civilian life, there are no such systems. Everything’s unpredictable. I can walk into a supermarket, and someone will give me a hard time. I’ll be driving my car, and another driver will cut me off or fly into a rage at me. I don’t have my friends, my team, my brothers to back me up.”

To tie all this together, let’s look at the back of the brain from an operational point of view.

## 1. The Relay Station/OP

This part of the brain collects information coming in from the external environment. It rapidly evaluates what needs to be attended to, be kept under observation, or immediately responded to. It is the rational, thinking, planning, observant part of ourselves. The more we are able to remain in OP (observe, plan, think, and organize) mode, the more likely we will be able to accurately assess situations and effectively manage them. When we step out of OP mode, the outside world can be perceived as dangerous and a real threat—other drivers, a cardboard box on the side of the road, or a chaotic shopping center. This is the part of our brain that has perspective and can think, plan, and coordinate. Without this part of our brain functioning properly, we lack perspective, and as a result, we cannot think or plan clearly. Without this perspective, we run the risk of friendly fire, which in civilian terms equates to unnecessary and excessive reactivity to situations that at a realistic and rational level do not place us or those around us at risk. An example of this is a veteran who describes a method of placing weapons around the house. The family has been trained to observe arches of fire and to triple check that all windows and doors are secured. At night, they will constantly wake up to listen and recheck. Any lapses in vigilance and safety protocols on the part of the family members can often be met with frustrated rage based on the anxieties and fears about the risk of attack.

Our challenge is to begin to use this part of our brain and begin to learn to stand down the other parts of our brain in civilian life. By “stand down,” I do not mean that we switch off the parts of the brain that instinctively react should a car lose control and drive at us, should our young child fall in the pool, or should a snake rear up in front of us on a hike. By stand down, I mean that we begin to activate the thinking parts of our brain so that we no longer hear every backfire as a shot or view every object on the side of the road as a potential IED.

## 2. The Trip Flare

This is the brain’s early-warning system. It expects threat and danger to be around every corner. It is from this position that the Claymore mine is triggered. The trip flare plays a significant role in anxiety. It is that part of our brain that is always alerted to changes in our environment. It is that part of our brain that lies in ambush, constantly alert to unusual sounds and the potential for the enemy to walk into the killing zone. When the trip-flare position is acute, blood flow to the relay station/OP part of our

brain is significantly reduced. This then restricts our capacity to think, plan, assess, and interpret. It can and does result in behaviors that can be destructive to ourselves and others. The consequence of a shutdown OP and activated trip-flare state can then result in a “contact,” as noted earlier—never an effective choice in civilian life.

### 3. The Contact Sequence

This is the part of our brain that gets us ready to react and initiates a response. It is that part of our brain that carries the HE (high explosive) and phosphorus grenades, Claymores, MAGs, mortars, and everything else. Remaining in contact mode results in casualties in civilian life. The impact of this level of arousal and reactivity on well-being at high levels can be very toxic and can increase the likelihood of self-destructive behaviors such as anxiety, stress, and alcohol abuse.

So now that you are all operationally trained neuroscientists, we will begin to look at a few simple and effective ways for you to begin to create more blood flow to the front of your brain and slowly move from reactivity to reason (a far better type of “R&R”). The next part of this book will also allow you to identify what sections of your brain are operational. Knowing this can already create some space between the situation and your being able to respond in effective and respectful ways—probably not a bad part for your partner to read so that when you identify being in an “ambush” state, your partner will understand you and can support you in order to make more effective choices.

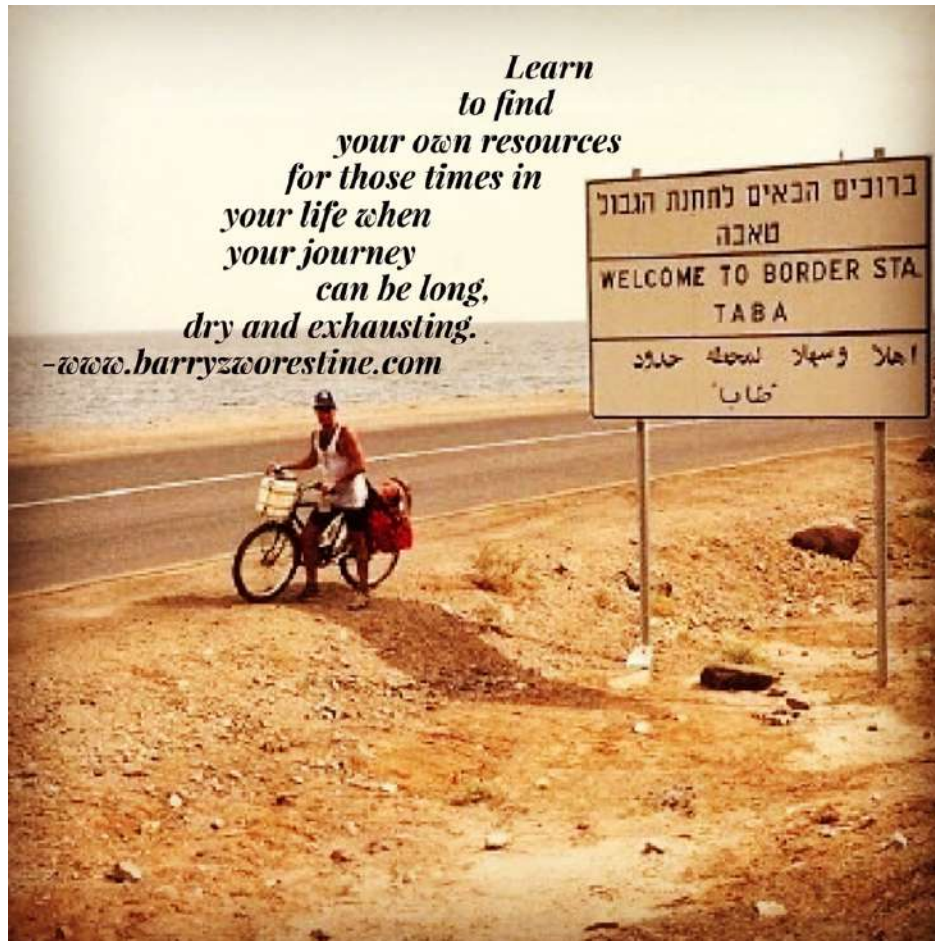


## INTRODUCTION TO 13 LESSONS TO SUCCESSFULLY OPERATE IN CIVILIAN TERRITORY



I missed a certain edge after leaving the military. I began to run, and with time I was eventually running marathons and ultramarathons. I felt at peace when I ran (and still do), and pushing through the “wall” left me feeling alive—until one day when someone asked me, “What are you running away from?” Ouch! This made me reflect on my running, and from that experience I also pulled together a number of running-related life lessons that eventually formed the thirteen lessons that follow.

## LESSON 1- GIVING UP IS NEVER AN OPTION



*Learn  
to find  
your own resources  
for those times in  
your life when  
your journey  
can be long,  
dry and exhausting.*  
*-www.barryzorestine.com*

No matter how difficult the journey may feel at times, it is important to remember that there is a beginning and an ending to everything. Giving up is never an option. If you need to sit down, then do so, but then get up, dust yourself off, and keep moving. Never give up. Instead, stop at times to take a breath and regroup. Pace yourself. Going backwards is not an option. Self-discipline and repetition of strategies and tools will keep you in the driver's seat.

I had spent several difficult months training for my first two ultramarathons. My first 64 km race went well. It felt effortless, and I completed the race in an excellent time. I then began the serious training for the uphill 87.5 km Comrades Marathon in South Africa, the world's first ultramarathon. The training was exhausting and demanding. My body was tired for ongoing periods, and it was far from an enjoyable experience. I wanted to give up numerous times. If I had been on my own, I may very well have found a reason to quit, but I had committed to a friend/ mentor who refused to allow

me to opt out and continually stressed that our agreement was binding and that giving up was not going to be an option he would support. I disliked him at times but being accountable to someone from having regular check-ins was the main reason I got to the starting line. Even today when working with veterans, I will suggest that they text me daily to tell me what they have achieved. We form a partnership towards their healing and for maintaining their discipline and focus.

I eventually got to the starting line. All I could see was eighty-seven kilometers of slow-rising hills disappearing into the distance. My confidence based on my previous race began to feel like uncertainty. But as everyone does and should do in committing to a challenge, we all drew on one another for encouragement. Try to find friends who can encourage and support you on your journey to change. Find friends who won't judge you but when necessary will give you a kick in the butt and refuse to allow you to give up.

At around the sixty-seven-kilometer mark, my knee started to act up. Every step was beyond painful. At that point, I still had twenty kilometers to go, and my body was falling apart. The encouragement and support of others and the first-aid station helped, but I was either going to have to find a way to step back from the pain or give in to it. I remember reminding myself about my commitment—that I had bought the badge, cap, and everything else—and that not crossing the line was never going to be an option. I would crawl if I had to. The combination of support from others, positive self-talk, my commitment to my goal, and moving with the pain got me over the line. Not a great time, but it was my best race, in that I rose above my perception of personal limitation.

**On your own journey, do the following:**

- Find someone to be responsible to.
- Find friends who will listen to and encourage you.
- Strengthen your will through discipline and effort.
  - Fully commit to your right to heal.
- Acknowledge that giving up will never be an option.

The right attitude plus appropriate support will get you across the finish line.



## LESSON 2- TAKE SMALL STEPS AND BEGIN SOMEWHERE



No matter how immobilized you may feel, it's all about your willingness to take the first step to change, no matter how small. Each step forward will bring you closer to change. If you can't run, then walk. If you can't walk, then crawl. Just begin somewhere.

"Dave," like many of the veterans I had worked with, had experienced many setbacks in his life. He defined these as personal failures and as a result tended to anticipate not succeeding. Before even beginning the change process, he was defeated. His mind-set was working against him. He had tried to reduce his drinking but had then gone on a binge. He had tried to improve his fitness but then became discouraged

and gave up. It all felt too difficult and overwhelming for him. It was easier to just allow his life and world to collapse inwards. Dave started to make progress when he began with small steps—going out every day to check his mail, taking a short walk around the block, keeping his apartment clean. By creating order in his life in small, achievable ways, Dave began to feel that he was back in the driver’s seat and feeling more in control of his life. He documented these bits of progress each day and shared them with me and his close supportive friends. Slowly he dug himself out of the hole he’d been in.

Wherever you are in life as you are reading this, begin somewhere. It doesn’t matter whether you run, walk, or crawl. What are you willing to do in your living space? What strategies/tools from this book, my website, or your own counselling are you prepared to use daily? Make a call to your veteran organization or check in with your doctor. Each small step will progress you forward. It’s like ascending an OP—the more you move forward, the higher you get, the greater and clearer your vision and understanding of the territory you are in will be. Set small, achievable goals and reward yourself in ways that are constructive. Learning to strip and assemble your weapon in any condition, even blindfolded, took hours of practice and perseverance. Learning to change your life is no different. One thing at a time. Get up, dust yourself off, and start again.



## LESSON 3 – BETTER TO CHOOSE CHANGE THAN IT CHOOSE YOU



Change takes effort, discipline, and commitment and some- times a fair bit of sweat. It is not simply given to us on a plate. You need to hunt change, fight for change, and adjust and adapt when required.

The fact that you are reading this book would suggest that a part of you wants to change and that you are looking for ways, insights, and support in this process. Recognize this and remember it. This book may or may not support you, but that you were called to give it a go says something. This book—what I have written, and I guess even the relationship between you and me as you read this—is a beginning. I always maintain that it is better to hunt change than to have change hunt you. Moving forward is not always going to be easy. Parts of you may jump up and try to ambush you. Stay alert, maintaining a situational alertness around these parts of yourself. You may have to fight against these parts at times. You may need to adjust your goals as

needed and adapt to changing territory. If you want to remain where you are, then this book may have little or no impact on you. Without you having the will to change, change will not happen.

## LESSON 4 – HE, Rat Pack, Claymore–Choose Your Tools



Identify what tools you need to help you on your way, whether it's good nutrition (the "rat pack," short for ration packs) or learning healthy ways to manage your stress, depression, and anxiety.

I had read lots of books on running marathons and ultramarathons. I had read and created training schedules and eating plans. I'd bought the right gear. It felt good,

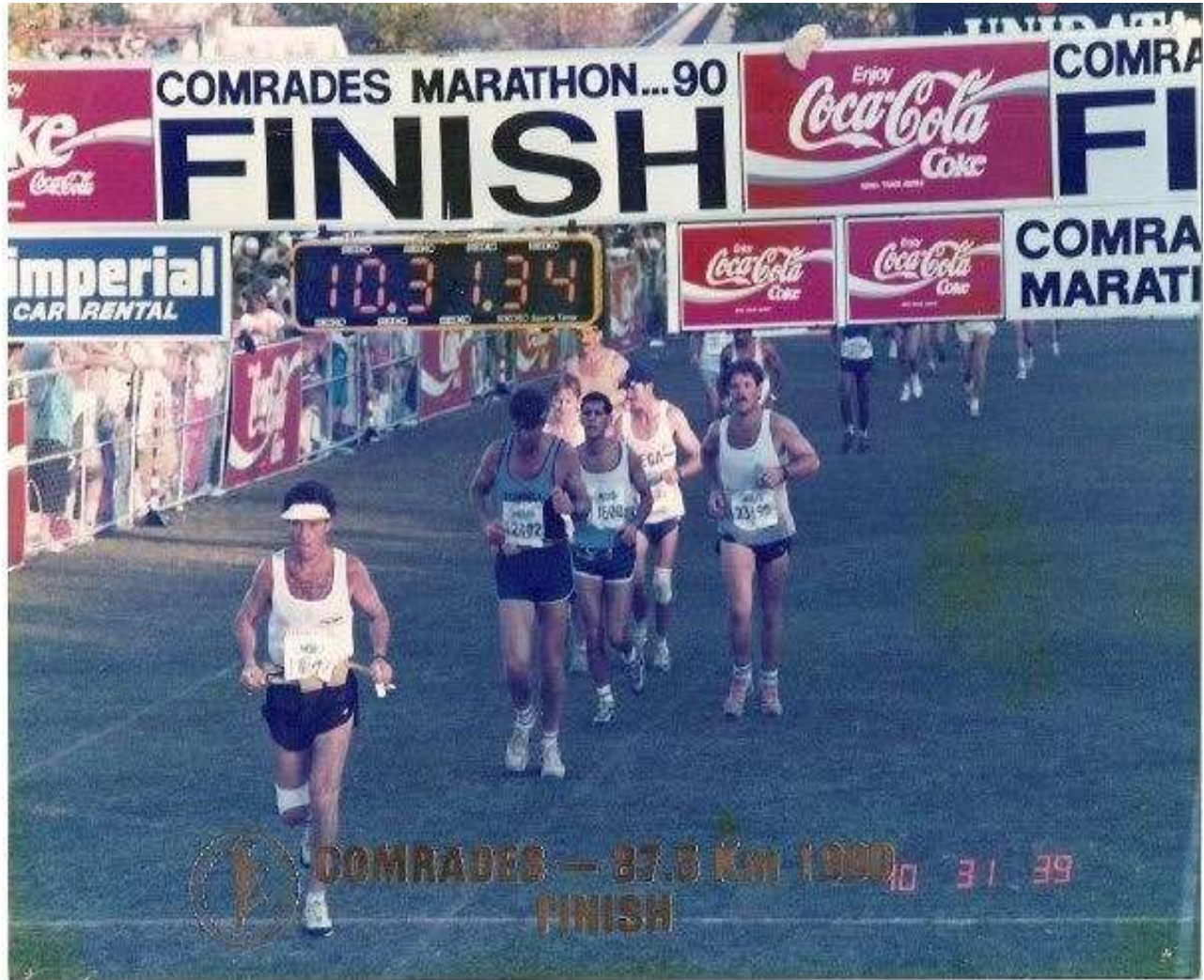
but what I had not yet committed to was action—getting my feet in the territory and accumulating kilometers, building my endurance, getting dirty and dusty, and developing a good mind-set and ability to hit and move through the “wall.” It’s good to identify the tools you need. You should become more knowledgeable and insightful through reading this book, but knowledge is never a substitute for committed and disciplined action.

This book may not be enough for you to identify the tools you need. If so, then get the support you need to help you and get on your way. Change will not wait for you, nor will it turn back and come towards you.

Try out some of the tools. Don’t give up on them right away. Change does not happen overnight, and neither do miracles. It takes time. Be prepared to keep doing what you have chosen to do and keep going through the territory where things appear to remain the same.



## LESSON 5 – If You Can Walk Don't Expect Others to Carry You



Others may run with you and encourage you, but at the end of the day, you alone are responsible for putting one foot in front of the other.

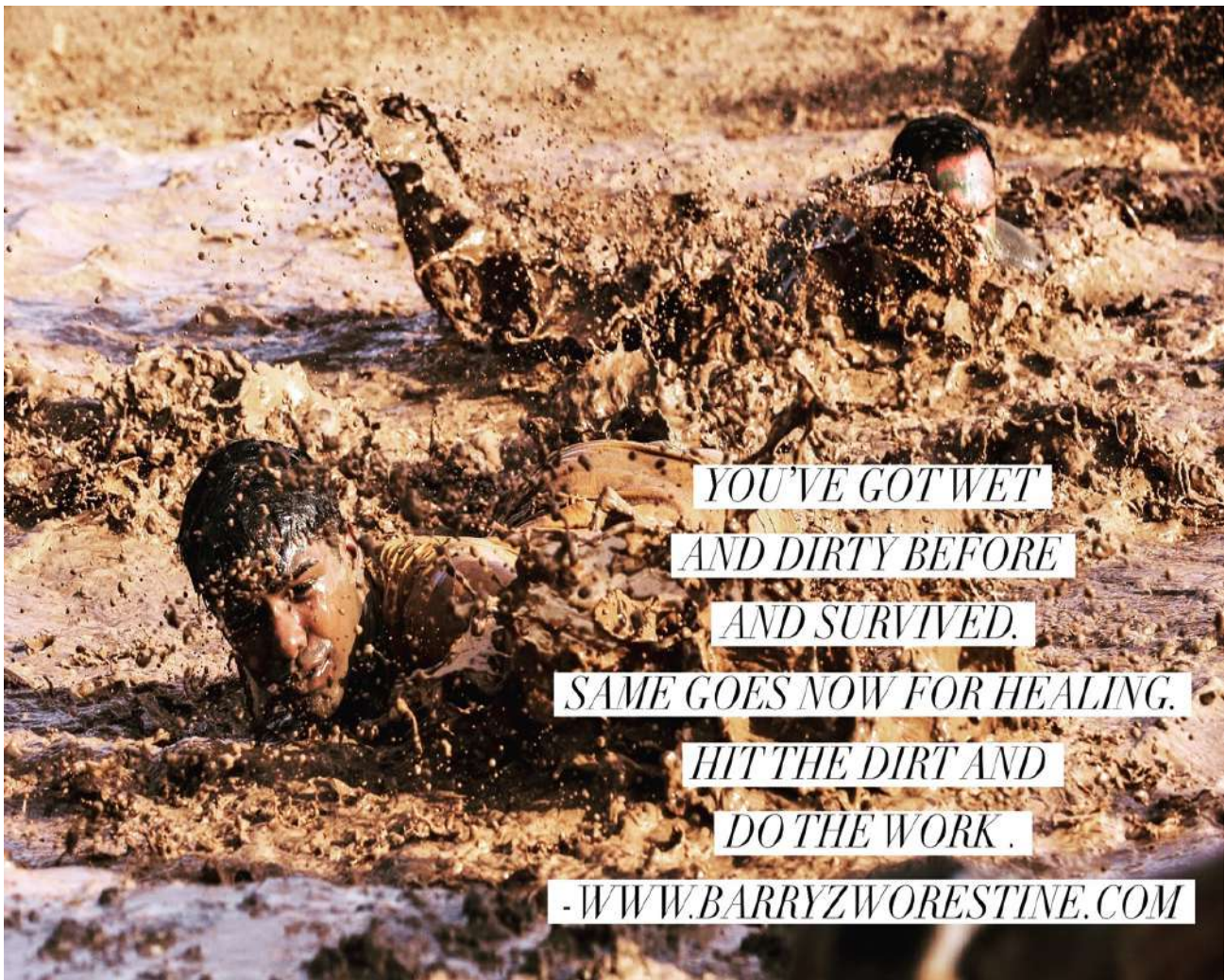
“Bill’s” friends and his wife were really excited and supportive of his desire to create change in his life and with those who were in it. He began well but could not sustain the challenges of change. He had a supportive network. They encouraged him to see someone and get help. They recognized and affirmed the small steps he was taking. But in the end, Bill kept choosing to sit on the side of the road. Gradually others became frustrated by his immobility and refusal not only to do something small but also to ask for appropriate help. His friends started to step away, and his wife began



to experience a sense of hopelessness that then created a distance between herself and Bill. Bill began to feel abandoned by everyone. He felt like a casualty.

The bottom line is that a time clock can be ticking away in the background. Others will give you 100 percent, but that will change over time if you do not meet these people and walk towards them. Nobody can carry you over the finishing line. They will walk beside you, but you need to be willing to walk with them. I've worked with veterans whose first step was to acknowledge their inability to move and to admit themselves into a program or clinic, or speak to a doctor, psychologist, psychiatrist, veteran organization, or 24-hour crisis line—there's always something you can do.

## LESSON 6 – Life Can Be an Obstacle Course



On the way to healing, you may encounter hills and obstacles. Stay focused on the journey, on the small steps, and remember that you were trained to go well beyond your comfort zone. The wiring is still there to draw on. Who you were as a warrior remains who you still are. So, respect yourself because life and others are not going to give this to you at times. Remember that you are never too old or wounded to deal with an obstacle course that life may bring to you.

“Dave” had been a special forces (SF) operator. As a result of an injury, he had been rapidly sidelined to a desk job. The trauma he experienced was not as a result of his operational experience but more a result of how he felt discarded and abandoned by his tribe. He lost his connection with his “brothers,” and he struggled to redefine

who he was. His was in many ways a moral, not an operational, injury. He felt betrayed by his "family." This went against everything he believed and stood for. It was only a matter of time before he was medically discharged and found himself completely lost and unprepared for civilian territory. He was haunted by a sense of failure and aloneness. From being able to manage complex operational demands and diverse thinking and the high-risk multi-tasking typical of SF operators, he was now accepting manual-labor jobs.

Over the years, I have always remained deeply concerned and frustrated about how so many competent warriors are treated, dealt with, and managed. That the suicide rate is so high is not surprising. In no way do I underplay the immense challenges of these adjustments. What I have learned is that they cannot be done on your own. Even reading this book is insufficient. Through appropriate support, you will be more able to reclaim who you were, respect and value those parts of yourself, manage the transition challenges you experience, and in time find a way for your warrior to coexist with your civilian. It can be a very daunting obstacle course, whether you're currently transitioning or have just become aware forty years later of the impact of that time of your life on your present. All the veterans I have sat with, no matter how traumatized they have been by their journeys, have embodied qualities that I deeply value, care for, and respect. I believe that we need more men and women with these values in civilian life. Others can learn from you. You've been to places that the majority of people cannot even get close to understanding. You carry the wisdom, strength, and endurance of the warrior. Part of your healing will be to reclaim who you were and then allow that part of you to coexist, wherever you may now be in life.



## LESSON 7 – Learn to Tolerate Discomfort



As you make change, don't always stay within your safety zone. Push yourself to extend your limits. Remember that the changes you want for yourself lie beyond your field of comfort. Focus your will and determination on your ability to sustain discomfort.

In running, I learned that the most powerful place was at the edge of my perceived limits, at the "wall." It was not where I was breathing easily and enjoying the race; it

was where I had to dig deep and rise above the self-limiting thoughts and feelings. It was at this point where I began to understand that no matter what the territory was like, I could control my attitude and draw on resources and training to move through and not just collapse.

You will most likely experience moments when you don't simply progress evenly into change but rather stretch into change. This is no different from your earlier experiences of training, selection, and operating. You may be called to move out of your comfort zone with your counsellor as you process feelings and memories. Getting fit, reducing your alcohol intake, changing behaviors, dealing with relationships, navigating your way into and through civilian life, and dealing with your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors—these can all be uncomfortable and challenging. Think about your willingness and personal commitment to do whatever it takes to create change within yourself and your life. The feelings, thoughts, memories, frustrations, and challenges you may currently be facing will not kill you. Remember that the “safety” of your comfort zone can become your contact zone, and that remaining where you are may not serve constructive movement forward. If you're reading this, then a part of you is already willing to extend into new territory. It's no different from going to the gym for the first time. The aches and pain are part of the journey as your muscles creak and groan. You set graduated targets to allow your body to strengthen and become more flexible. Life and relationships are no different.



## LESSON 8 - Commit To the Terrain



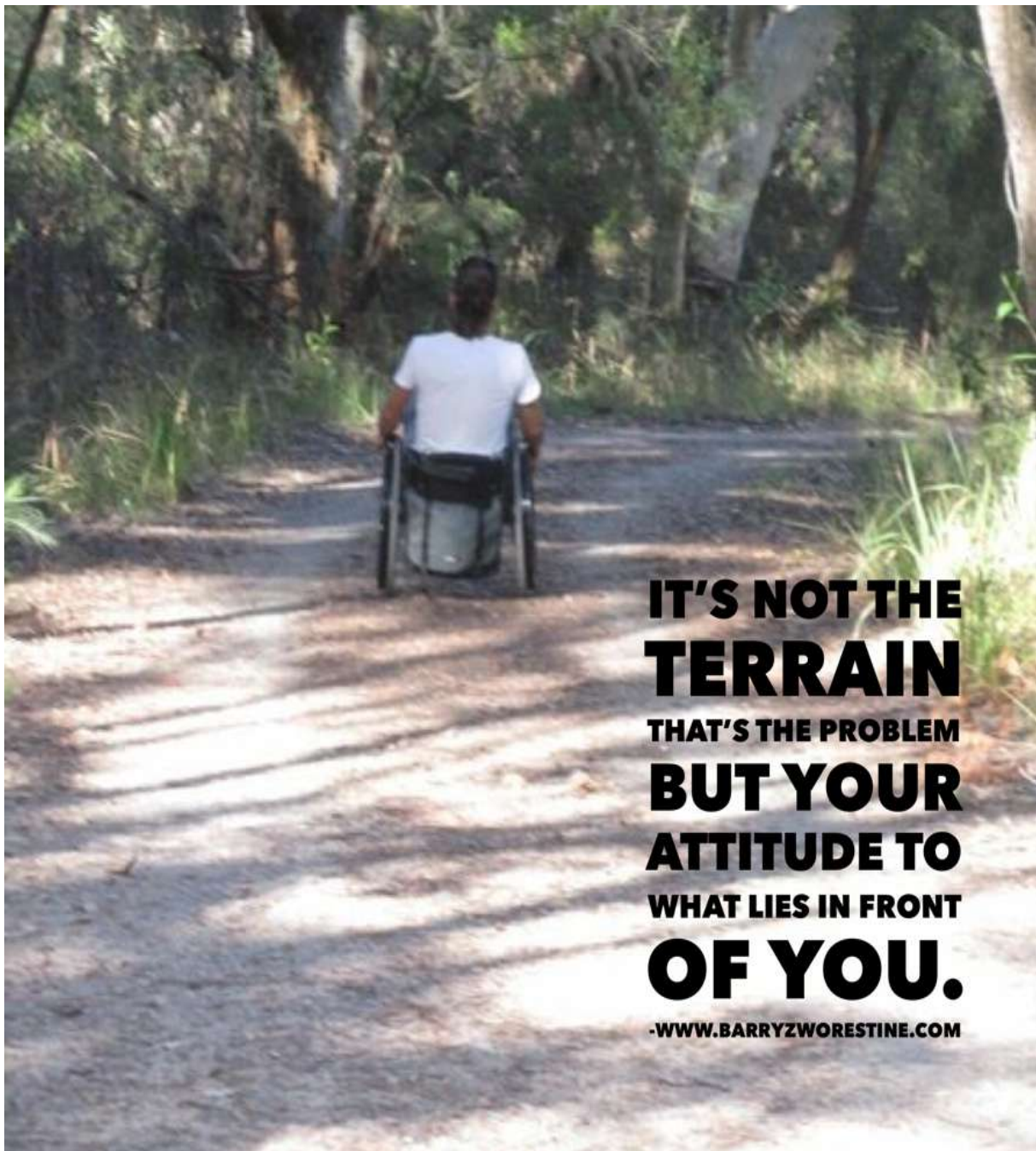
The more you fully engage in your commitment to change, the more emotionally and psychologically fit you will become at sustaining the rigors of the journey.

When I asked "George" what had brought him to counselling, he noted that his wife had had enough of his bad moods and outbursts and had threatened to leave if he did not get help. I asked George how personally committed he felt to creating change and also whether he felt he needed to change. George acknowledged feeling uncertain. He said that he'd had no problems in his relationships with other veterans and that he felt it was up to his wife to learn how to understand veterans and to be more accepting of his difficulties. He was angry about being told what to do, being told that he was the problem, and he was angry that he always caved in to his wife's demands. In time, it became clear to both of us that George's commitment to dealing with his relationship challenges, whether it was in individual

or couples counselling, was very ambivalent. He made little progress and terminated after a few sessions.

Take some time now and think about why you are reading this book. What is happening in your life that is challenging you? Is your need to enter the terrain of change based on others' expectations, or is it driven by your personal commitment to yourself? Or a little of both? The greater the strength of your commitment, the more successful you'll be at navigating your way through the territory. This and other books will offer you tools and training to draw on that you will need to use to sustain your commitment.

## LESSON 9 – Keep Moving No Matter What



**IT'S NOT THE  
TERRAIN  
THAT'S THE PROBLEM  
BUT YOUR  
ATTITUDE TO  
WHAT LIES IN FRONT  
OF YOU.**

**-WWW.BARRYZWORESTINE.COM**

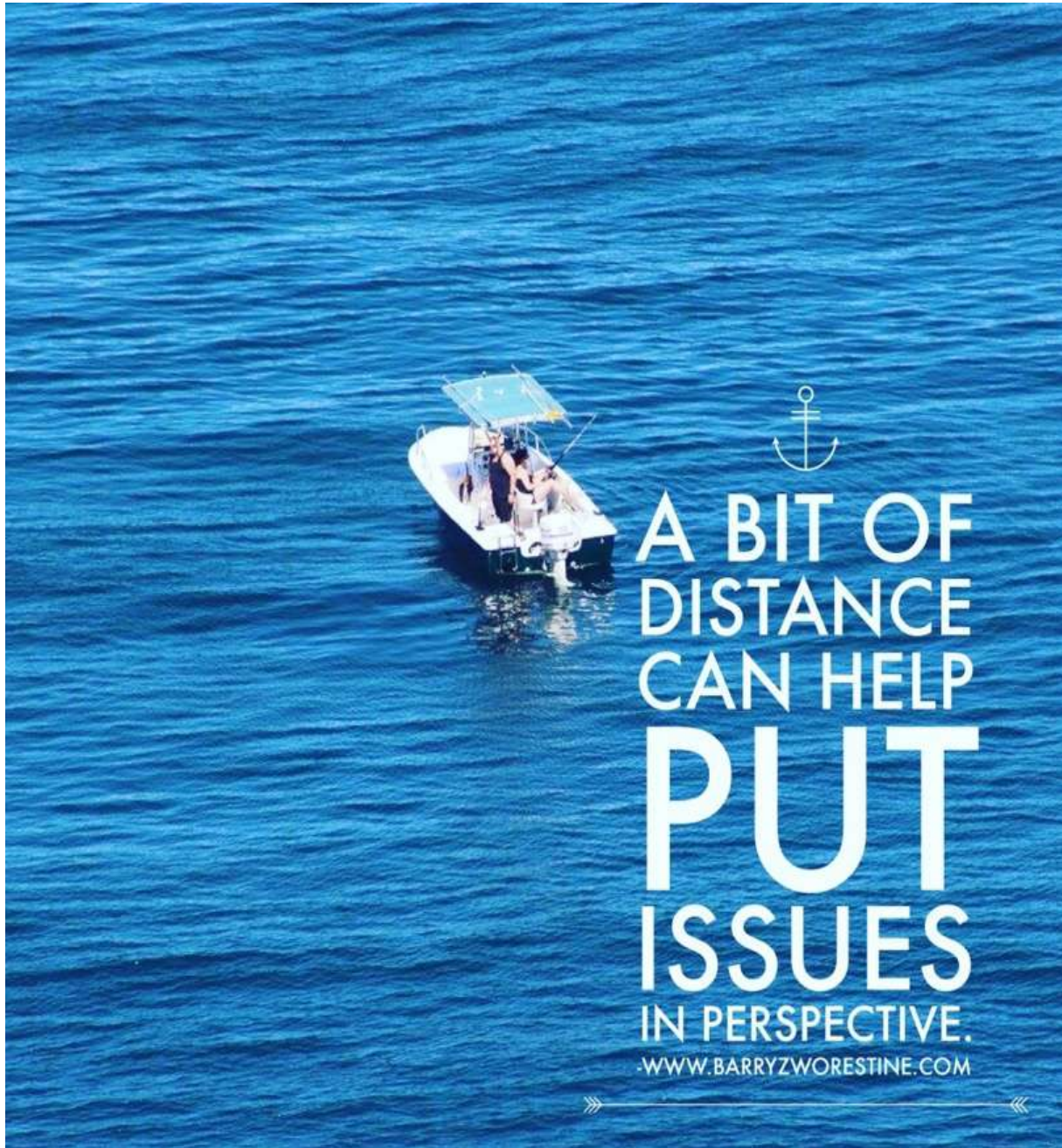
Initially, the resources you carry to support you on your journey may feel overwhelming. As you strengthen and as you start to use them, however, the load will become lighter.

At times, you may find yourself sitting down by the side of the road, miserable, frustrated, and angry. You may be hitting a wall at every turn in the road. By “keep moving,” I mean have your moment but then get up, dust yourself off, and keep going. Your pack may be heavy with all the things you are carrying from your life. If the weight feels overwhelming, then control your pace and take breaks. You no longer need to push yourself to the breaking point. Small steps will get you across the line. The farther you travel, the more competent you will feel and the faster you will progress.

If you're having a rough day as you read this and just want to go AWOL (absent without leave), then take a few minutes and use some of the tools you will find on my website. They will help you find a clearer, calmer place in your body. Think about one thing you may be willing to do today, one person you would be willing to call, and one task that you may be willing to complete. Try to get out the front door, breathe, and go for a short walk. Just keep moving.



## LESSON 10 – OP Mode Can Save Your Skin



At times, you may need to behave as if you're on an observation post where you simply keep your mouth shut and your head down. Listen, observe, monitor, and learn. Shoot your mouth off, and the double tap you next hear may be directed straight at you. Remaining observant, identifying your arcs of fire/behavior, and keeping



situationally alert can keep you safe. Your relationship with others and yourself depend on this.

“Phil,” a Vietnam veteran, noted that “I cannot tolerate fools. If they’re not doing things the way I think they should, or they’re going about it too slowly, I end up getting frustrated, angry, and reactive. I know that all this is doing is creating tension and stress for me with my kids, wife, friends, and coworkers. I can see myself shooting my mouth off, but I just can’t stop myself.”

This sound familiar? Having a “runaway mouth” will never be constructive. You may have read the chapter on “Operational Neuroscience”. If not, read it now, or here’s a quick summary: When you are triggered, the back of your brain (the emotional center) will kick up with stress, anger, irritation, and everything else. As a result, the blood flow to the front of your brain (the thinking, planning, and organizing part) is reduced. The more reduced the flow of blood, the less likely you will be to think clearly. You will find yourself driven and almost trapped by the emotion. A part of yourself may even know that this is not going to work, but you find you can do nothing to change. You are now just firing on automatic.

When you are in this position, having someone tell you to calm down is not going to work. First you need to bring down the back of your brain to allow you to get into OP (observe, plan, think, and organize) mode. At this point, you need body-based tools such as breathing, tapping (this is a technique where you tap on specific points on the body, which then provides relief from anxiety and stress), drinking cold water, and other tools (detailed in this book). If you need to, go put yourself under a cold shower—that should do the trick and get you out of runaway mode. You will need to learn to create a stopgap between the emotion and the behavior to allow your body to slow down and for blood to get to the front of your brain. It may be helpful to explain to others that sometimes you may need to take time out to calm down and then return.

## LESSON 11 – Blame Is Dead Weight



Every day is a gift, whether you are with your military friends or with family and other friends. Assess whether you are taking anyone for granted or whether you are taking things personally and reacting. Treating others as the enemy and blaming them won't keep you alive.

People around you may be giving you a hard time. Civilian life may be pushing your buttons. Your boss may be in your face. This is absolutely not easy, but the minute you move into victim-and-blame mode, you begin to dig a hole that can be challenging to climb out of. Acknowledging and respecting that parts of your life may not be easy is fair enough. But feeling persecuted by everything and everyone will load your pack with enough weight to immobilize you.

If you can identify those parts of yourself that blame others and feel victimized in your current situation, then the next step is to be willing to get support to allow you to reduce this destructive load.

## LESSON 12 - Pull-Through or Stoppage



Of critical importance is your regular pull-through, or PT. (As noted earlier, a pull-through is where a soldier pulls an oily rag through the barrel of a rifle in order to clean it.) Keep your barrel clean. Remember that life challenges and whatever else



you carry will leave residues. If you neglect to pull through, then you will eventually get a stoppage.

This concept/principle is probably one of the most effective lessons that I use with veterans and those who are currently serving. It's the one thing that always makes sense to the people I sit with. Whether you are a veteran or a civilian, a husband or wife or anything else, life affects us in either positive or challenging ways. Life, our histories, and ageing will all leave a residue. If we ignore the residue, if we fail to regularly do a pull-through as well as strip, clean, and oil all moving parts, then a stoppage will eventually occur. This stoppage may be a burst of anger, a bout of depression, a panic attack, or overwhelming and high levels of stress. Whatever it is, the common denominator will be that it does not work constructively for you. Good nutrition, sleep, exercise, lifestyle balance, and getting appropriate support and tools to use daily will all support you in keeping your barrel clean. As a veteran, you have learned the importance of cleaning your weapon regularly. It is just as important to learn to keep the many parts of yourself clean and well oiled.

On my website and in this book, you will find a number of PT tools that I have used with veterans over the years and that they have found effective. These are tools that I also personally use on a daily basis. I encourage you to have a look at these and to discuss them with the professionals who are working with you. If they support you in using them, then give the tools a try and give them time to have an impact on you. An endless number of tools are available out there. Look around and research them. My choices need not be your choices. But at the end of the day, make a choice and start putting into practice your own daily pull-through.

Remember that a PT consists of becoming informed as well as taking focused, rehearsed, and disciplined action.

## LESSON 13 – Take Time for a Good Brew



Take time on the way to enjoy the sights. It's not all hard work. Pay attention to the positives in your life and enjoy the journey. Change and transformation without a good laugh every now and then can leave you discouraged.

This is a simple lesson, and very little more needs to be said about it other than this: take time for a good brew- whether it's a beer (non-alcoholic!) or herbal tea or a strong cup of coffee enjoyed with friends and enjoy the ration pack special "dog biscuits."

## A BRIEF SUMMARY

You should by now have a greater understanding of the following:

1. What mind-set will support you in making forward progress.
2. The importance of not just thinking change but implementing change.
3. How your brain works, both regarding the impact of operations and in transitioning into civilian life.
4. Thirteen lessons you can use that will support you in a number of ways.

These bits of advice should support you in moving forward through the territory of your brain and in your personal life, whether you are still in the military, you are in the process of transitioning into civilian life, or you made the transition a while ago.

Having seen many spouses and children of veterans, I have no doubt that the relationship (and civilian) territory can be more bewildering, unpredictable, and uncharted than any military territory. Partners I have spoken with over the years have continually noted how the veterans they love bring the war back home. They describe the reactivity, moodiness, need for control, hyper vigilance, isolation, ease of being triggered, difficulties navigating through intimacy, and challenges in communication. They note that the veterans seem to be wired for the fight-or-flight instinct. They struggle with the deep bonds they have with their fellow veterans, which often feel more intimate than those between themselves and their partners.

I am not a relationship expert, nor do I work with couples. This book is therefore not an in-depth exploration of couple work. But many of the lessons (the constructive ones that fit into civilian terrain) learned in the military and on operations can also be applied to your relationship.

I once worked with a veteran who was aware of his reactivity to his wife. In situations of disagreement or whenever he felt he was being criticized, he would become dismissive, aggressive, or just walk away. I asked him how he'd behaved when patrolling through a village, where the women of the village had been verbally and physically aggressive towards him. He noted that he'd paid no attention to them and had maintained a controlled and neutral position. I then asked him how it was that, when his wife wanted to communicate her frustration and feelings towards him, he reacted as if she were the enemy and were armed. I reminded him that if in these

situations he could demonstrate self-control, then with appropriate support he could again learn to achieve more constructive ways of communicating.

Perhaps the one thing I would like to stress is that the brain at war does not differentiate territories. It will behave in civilian life the same way it does in military life. But you have all learned the discipline of self-control. If the challenges of what you've been through at war have had an impact on the positive qualities of being a warrior, then please see someone and get help. You are not short of courage. Draw on the resources in this book as well as your friends and helping professionals and veteran organizations in your own country. You owe it to yourself as well as to those who love and care for you.

As a contribution to you becoming more effective in connecting with your significant others, I have identified seven protocols that can support you while you are also getting the support you need.

First, please read the following poem.





## HOW DO I...

How do I make my peace with the killing?

How do I find peace from the nightmares that haunt my sleep and my dreams?

How do I forget the lifeless eyes of the child or my brother lying still and bleeding in the grass?

How do I silence the sounds of screaming and pain that still haunt me?

How do I talk of the fear that continues to this day?

How do I switch off the hyper-vigilance that exhausts me?

How do I find a moment of peace away from the war that still rages in my brain?

How do I numb the pain that has closed my heart to everyone I love?

How do I awaken my heart from the numbness that has stilled my feelings?

How do I make you understand the grief, the pain, the loss, the fear, the rage?

How do I ask for help when there are no words to speak?

How do I ask for the help I need when help is the last thing I want?

How do I ask for forgiveness for the pain I have brought

into your life?

How do I undo the damage that my rage has caused?

How do I break down the walls that I have built around myself to protect me from the world and others?

How do I break down the walls that I have built to protect others from the nightmares and rage that live within me?

How do I find hope during the moments when I wish to embrace death?

How do I find life in my memories of death?

How do I let go of the ghosts that live beside and within me every minute of my day and night?

How do I ask you to hold me when my heart is bleeding with pain?

How do I find my home in this place beyond the war?

How will I no longer need to drink the pain away?

How do I tell my story without the fear of seeing the horror in your eyes?

How do I?

How do?

I.

## 7 Lessons for Operating in Relationship Territory



**Your struggle is  
understandable.  
Just don't close  
your heart.  
-[www.barryzwostine.com](http://www.barryzwostine.com)**

## LESSON 1 – Keep Your Safety On

*“I don’t know what happens every time my wife brings an issue or a concern to me about the relationship. I immediately feel like no matter what I do, I’m going to get judged or blamed and that it’s always going to be my fault. I get really irritated, frustrated, and worked up. I can see that I’m becoming abrupt and argumentative. As things escalate, I start to feel out of control, to the point where I either get out of the room or start becoming aggressive. She feels like the enemy at that point. We often just end up screaming at each other till she bursts into tears.”*

You can try a few things to avoid getting to this point:

1. As you enter any potentially tricky communication, just breathe. This will bring down the back of your brain.
2. Have a drink of really cold water (carry a bottle in your back pocket or nearby), as this also helps change the blood flow.
3. Don’t see this as an attack. Adopt the position of first wanting to listen so that you can understand. Ask your partner to tell you more about why he or she is feeling this way. Remember that the other person’s story is real, but it may not be your experience. But your partner has the right to be listened to.
4. Go into OP mode. If your “inner child” is taking it personally, then step away from and invite your adult in. Listen and breathe. In the end, it’s often not so much about a scoreboard of who is right or wrong but just the experience of somebody respectfully listening to you. Remember that listening is all about keeping your safety on and ensuring that you are not locked and loaded.
5. Prior to getting into tricky territory, if you find that you become quickly overwhelmed, then find a quiet time with your partner and negotiate that you will take a brief time out to focus and center and then return to the conversation. As one partner of a veteran once said to me, “It doesn’t matter what I do. If I try and communicate how I’m feeling without blame, he immediately takes it personally and gets uptight, defensive, and aggressive. I feel like I’m always walking on eggshells and having to be hypervigilant around him. I love him, but I end up feeling so alone. I just wish he could learn to listen. He doesn’t need to fix things, and I’m not trying to attack him.”



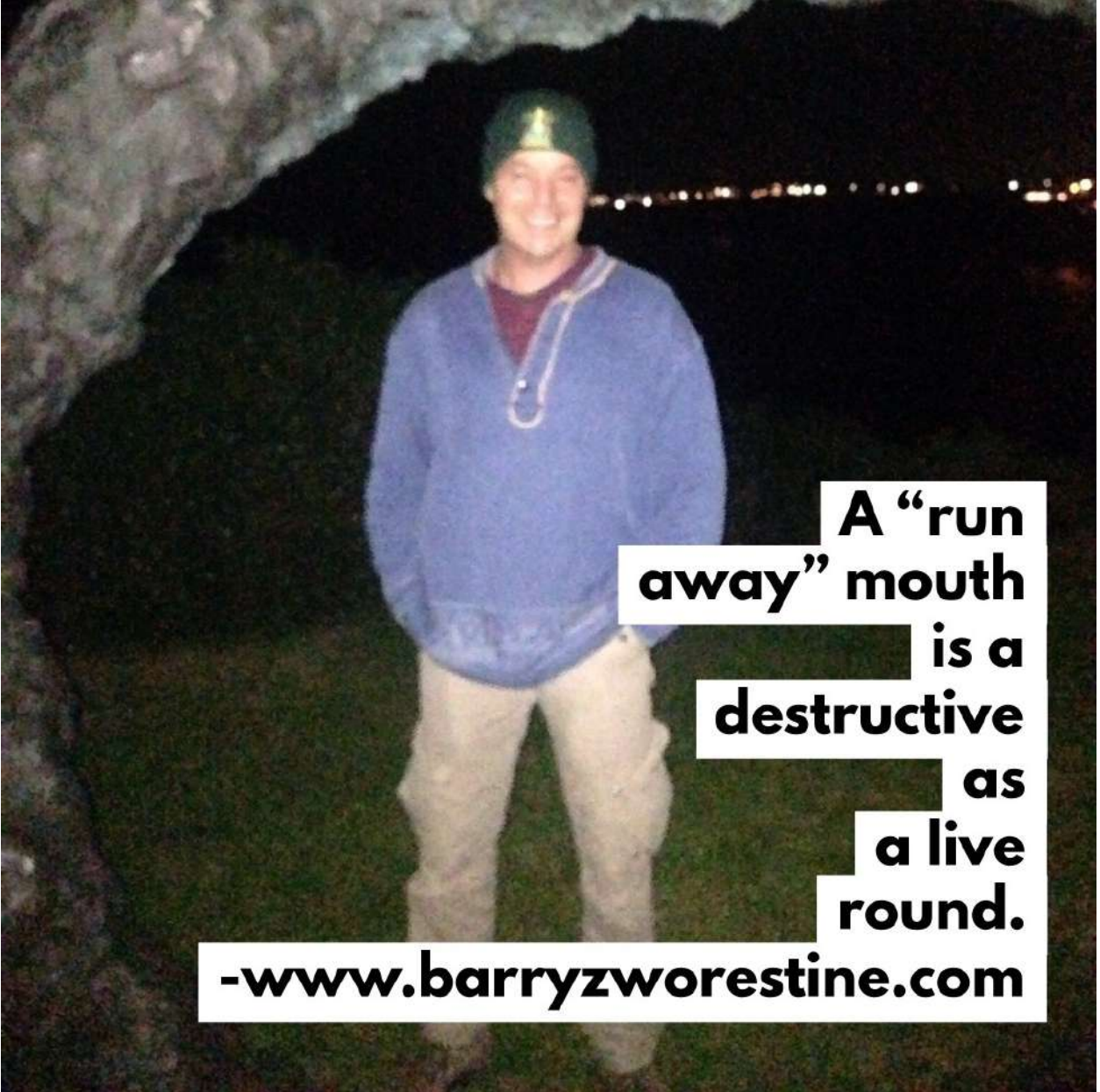


## LESSON 2 – Respect

*“There are times when I look into his eyes when we’re having a tricky discussion, and all I see is hate or coldness. It’s like if I would just disappear, he’d be happy. I see no care for how I feel. It’s exhausting. I feel like everything is about his needs and his difficulties from the war. But what about me?”*

If your anger, anxiety, and reactivity are not within your control, then ask for help to get you to a point of becoming more on top of your feelings. Your partner is no different from the soldiers you operated with or those who outranked you. Unless your partner is abusive towards you, then he or she has earned the right to be respected. Veterans often bring the war home, resulting in the family walking on eggshells around them. If your partner has demonstrated care and a willingness to love and support you, then you also need to understand how challenging it can be to care for a veteran. As much as you struggle, so do the others in your life. They have earned the right for respect. Your responsibility is to use the tools the professionals who are supporting you have given you, as well as those in this book and on my website. To get from point A to point B in a different way, you need to find a way to change how you approach situations.

Every day wake up and look at the person lying next to you. Do the same when you head to sleep at night. Think about what this person has brought into your life and the qualities you value in him or her. Think about the good times you’ve had, and while you’re holding and feeling the memories and emotions, just breathe gently in and out. If you like writing, then each day at the end of the day, identify and write three positive things you noticed during the day in connection with your relationship. Do this every day. The one way to change behaviors that feel stuck is to identify what you are grateful for. The more you do this, the more you will actually create brain and neural change. If you fake it long enough (it can initially feel very artificial doing this), then it will eventually become a real feeling.



**A “run  
away” mouth  
is a  
destructive  
as  
a live  
round.**

**-[www.barryzworestine.com](http://www.barryzworestine.com)**

## LESSON 3 – Self Control

*“I always try to go in with good intentions, but as soon as things crank up, I just lose self-control. I hate seeing myself like this. I used to be able to stay calm and focused in all situations when on operations. My guys always used to comment on how safe they felt around me, because they trusted me. I felt good about myself. Now I see myself getting dismissive, aggressive, and cold. I see fear in my wife’s eyes.”*

I find that it can help if, when we become triggered, we not see the other as the problem but rather as a “messenger,” in that the messenger is bringing attention to a part of ourselves that needs to be dealt with. Why attack the messenger? The messenger is not the enemy. The messenger is simply delivering a message. Someone else at another time and place will do the same thing. If that part of you were not there, then you would not be triggered. What is it in your personal history that is being triggered? What are the emotions that are arising? What are the thoughts? The more you can see and feel the other as a neutral energy, the less likely you will be to attack.

If you are at a point where you become aware of the possibility of losing control, then briefly walk away to regroup. Breathe as soon as you become aware that your stress levels are rising. Listen and breathe. It’s OK to say, “I’m finding this really stressful, and I just need to take time out for ten minutes.”

You may have a lot bouncing around inside of you but work on creating a gap between the thought and the behavior. Use your tools to increase your ability to respect how you feel but be able to exercise respectful choice about what you do with what you feel.





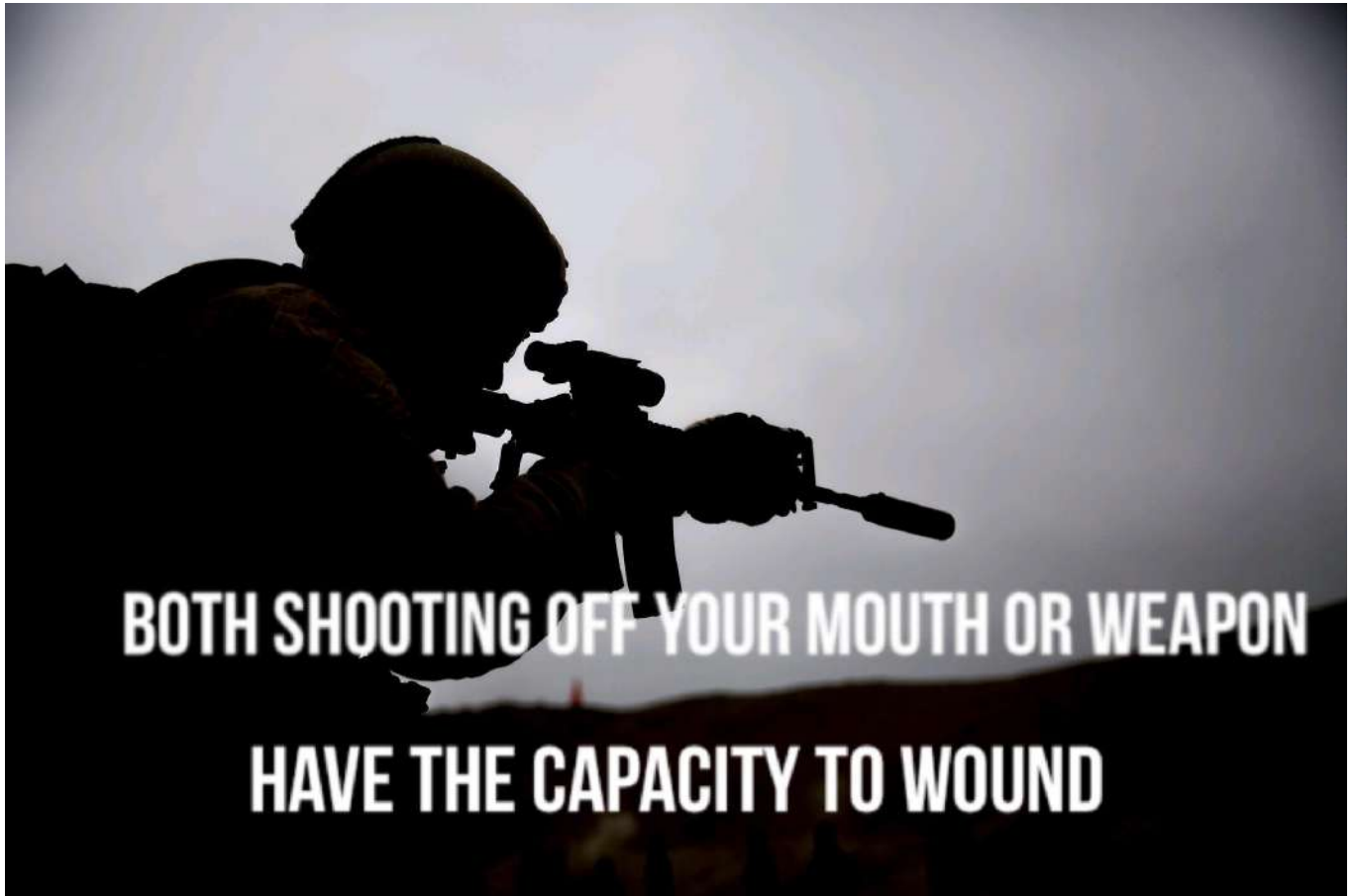
sometime you need some distance to work things out.

— -barry zwoestine — -

## LESSON 4 – Clarify

*“I remember when my wife used to start a discussion about how unsupported she was feeling, I immediately used to get fired up. I was doing everything I could to hold part-time work, and to even find any work at times. I’d been trying to cut down on my drinking and had been seeing a counsellor. The more defensive I became, the more frustrated she would get. It was all downhill from there. It was only when I realized that it was not about justifying or defending my position, but rather asking for more information and allowing her to talk, that we began to make progress.”*

You never rushed into any unmapped territory. You took time to observe, look at a map, and identify points of risk. So why rush in blindly into a conversation? Ask for more information. Ask for clarification. Use questions such as, “Can you tell me more about what you’re saying? Can you give me some examples of what you see me doing? What would it look like for you to see me as being more supportive?” The very asking of these questions allows the other person an experience of being listened to. It also creates a stopgap for you to regroup, breathe, and ground yourself. Often, as soon as we feel listened to, we are then more likely to feel supported. Mission achieved.



## LESSON 5 – Arcs of Fire

*“There were so many moments when I just used to lose it. I’d go off at my family, friends, while driving on the road, and at my coworkers. I was like a runaway gun, just shooting my mouth off at anything and everyone.”*

Arcs of fire are there for the sole purpose of not placing others at risk. (In military parlance, an arc of fire is the area of the ground a unit or individual is responsible for covering). It’s critical to identify your personal boundaries and not allow yourself to be abused or used. These behaviors, as well as the setting and communicating of limits, are well within your arcs of fire. Start to identify these arcs in all situations. Identify who and what fits into the arc and what is outside of it. Learn to step back from what is outside your area of responsibility. Learn to communicate effectively and clearly with what falls within your area of influence. Learn tools to regulate your emotions. Remember, “cock, hook, and look”: take a moment, breathe, and create a space between the situation as you perceive it and your triggered reaction. In this space, first use the “cock hook” and then have a good look. For a moment try and go into OP mode. Step back and get out of the killing ground. What you are next going to do will define who you are and can be.

You are entitled to feel what you want, but you have the responsibility for what you do with those feelings. Maintaining arcs of fire takes discipline and an awareness of others around you. Your spouse, children, friends, other drivers, people on the street, and coworkers are part of your unit.

They are not the enemy.





G-gloomy R- reactive  
E-explosive  
N-nasty A- attacking  
D- defensive E-erratic  
Maybe it's time to deal with  
your grenade?  
-[www.barryzwoestine.com](http://www.barryzwoestine.com)

## LESSON 6 – Accidental Discharge

*“There was a moment sitting around the table with my family when I lost it. The kids were fighting, and my wife was exhausted and was screaming at them and me to sort it out. The next thing I knew, I had a knife at her throat and was threatening to kill the children unless they shut up. There was this pause. It felt like a picture frozen in time. All I could see was sheer fear in my wife’s and children’s eyes. They were looking at me as if I was a monster. It was like I had gone into automatic.”*

All accidental discharges (ADs) are potentially life- threatening situations. Part of taking responsibility for an AD is to recognize that you need support. This not only can have an impact on your healing but will also demonstrate an intent to those you love that you are willing to change. Remember, you are not “damaged.” You are a fine veteran whose brain is struggling to differentiate between war and civilian life. Too many traumatized veterans bring the war home with them. The family becomes hyper-vigilant and walks on eggshells. Those you love are no different from the soldiers you operated with.

As much as your focus was to bring everyone home alive by excelling in who you were and the skills you required, the same is true with those you love: your intent is to do no harm to them. Your attitude to healing needs to be that no matter how tough it could get, you are willing to do whatever it takes to protect others in your territory.

The strength of your attitude to create healing and change is where it all begins, and it is who you were and still are!





WARRIOR  
ATTRIBUTES —  
LEAVING

*nobody behind  
also means*  
NOT TURNING  
AWAY FROM YOURSELF.  
—WWW.BARRYZWORESTINE.COM

## LESSON 7 – Keep Your Barrel Clean

*“It’s never been easy to adjust after I left the military. I felt safer on operations than I’ve felt in civilian life. I couldn’t deal with the noise, the unpredictable and self-directed behaviors, the chaotic roads, the busy shopping centers, and also trying to figure out who I was outside of uniform and away from my brothers. I saw endless psychologists but just had no motivation to do anything they suggested. It’s like I would talk to someone and feel better for a while, but slowly the stress and the chaos would filter into my bones and brain. I only realized this when I lost it in some way. It took a lot before I realized that if I was really going to change, I needed to bring the same disciplines of soldiering to my civilian life—self-discipline, daily practice, and repetition till my behavior became instinctive and automatic. No matter how out of it I felt, I could still exercise, keep my space tidy, eat healthily, and use the tools that professionals suggested. The ability to remain in the driver’s seat needs to be earned by sheer intent and effort, no matter how small the steps are.”*

As this veteran’s statement attests, the bottom line is that transitioning to being able to successfully operate in civilian life can be extremely challenging. To not pay attention to these challenges is exactly the same as neglecting to do your “pull-through,” as discussed in previous chapters, in order to keep your barrel clean. At some point, you will experience a stoppage. Your core drive will be to identify what your toolbox that you draw on daily consists of. Every day is an opportunity for a pull-through. A clean barrel equals potentially less fallout.

On my website and this book, I talk you through a number of pull - throughs that many people have found extremely useful. Try them out and give them a chance. Change takes time. Between the intent and the experience of change is a journey.

In 1990, I decided to run the uphill Comrades ultra- marathon, as noted earlier. Although my intent was clear, I obviously had not expected the demands of training to be as rigorous and time consuming as I had imagined. At times, I was looking for any excuse to opt out. I began to resent the demands of the person who was training me. I lost faith in myself. But the combination of a determined mentor and my willingness to do whatever it took— no matter how challenging both the training and the race itself would be—eventually got me over the finish line. I hope that, in whatever small way, this book supports you in crossing your own finish line.



## OPERATIONS



Training as a soldier and being involved in combat no doubt can be traumatic and can have far-reaching effects on one's living situation, relationships, mental state, and well-being. It is possible, though, that to see war and to think about combat from only the point of view of an experience that has resulted in PTSD may be to ignore other less spoken about aspects of this experience that could be used to facilitate healing and the ability and right for all veterans to live healthy, productive lives.

What about the intensity of combat—the living on the edge in the presence of others and the intimate reliance on others? It's that feeling of being intensely alive, the high of the hunt, the power of the warrior within, the knowing where you are, the location in a community, the camaraderie—it's about a level of meaning and experience that can leave one yearning for a lifetime afterwards in what veterans often experience as the humdrum routine of civilian life and the daily routine and predictable pattern of work.

Many veterans I have spoken to have yearned for the time when they truly felt like soldiers, when the deeply close and intimate connectedness with their fellow soldiers that had bonded through the blood rite of combat could almost transcend the intimacy of marital relationships.

In a deep way, it's not just about trauma and stress but also about loss and grief and the difficulty of finding meaning in a different, less intense world.

To heal is to therefore also respectfully acknowledge this loss and grief at many levels. It's about understanding that the seductive intensity of combat, with its unique sounds and smells, does not need to leave one feeling lost, bereft, and dislocated. It's about understanding that the memory of the thrill of the hunt, the "contact" (in the military sense of encountering the enemy), and the long days of hyperalert patrolling do not mean that the veteran is maladjusted.

It's about the acceptance of these feelings without guilt. It's about re-creating new and constructive challenges in civilian life. These can be challenges such as maintaining personal fitness and well-being, taking up a sport, or setting goals that can extend one and bring one back into the presence of others—running a marathon, walking for charity, swimming, and the like. The "edge," the feeling of being authentically alive, of being challenged, and of being with others, is not the sole right of war. Part of combat training is about being taught how to kill. It's about being rewired for life in a way that is counter to being human in an institution that sanctions the need for aggression and the ability to take life.

Veterans need to make their peace with this rewiring, with the deep and often shameful awareness that forty years later, as a husband and father or wife and mother, there is still the sense of that part of oneself that is capable of the unspeakable.

Healing is not about burying or forgetting this. It's about allowing veterans to acknowledge, own, and respect this part of themselves. Veterans can use many of the lessons of war and combat to move forward in their civilian lives. Healing is about helping veterans to draw on their strengths and the constructive lessons of soldiering.

Life and relationships are very much like a patrol. You need to think about where you are going and what you will need in the days ahead. You need to plan and ensure that you will work as a team. You need to be able to listen, and when you are lost or uncertain, look at a map. You need to pace yourself and, at times when under significant levels of stress, draw on your reserves and tap into supplies of resilience. You need to trust and care for those around you. You need to exercise judgement. The qualities of planning, listening, preparation, consultation, care, respect, resilience, effort, and trust are the foundations of being human.

War need not just be an experience relegated to the psychiatric or counselling encounter. It need not be just traumatically stressful. Yes, it can be all of these, but the soldier never dies—commemorative gatherings will live on as soldiers continue to gather, grieve, and walk the road of memory while for a brief moment in time recapturing a moment, they hold in the deepest part of themselves.

Healing is about embracing the soldier and re-finding the warrior in the present and drawing on the positive aspects from the past: who you were and who you still are. It's about remembering that as veterans, they can still stand tall. It's about acknowledging grief, guilt, loss, and shame and learning to stand tall. Combat need not just be the end of a good life, but the beginning of an even better life firmly grounded in the wisdom, learning, and experience found in that place called war.



## VETERAN DIAL DOWN



*After the contact I was aware of 'coming down' to 'normal'. Did what "had to be done" having functioned on a different plane. We moved out and came back later that night to set up an ambush, in case of any terrs (terrorists) returning - but to no avail.*

*That functioning and "doing what had to be done", has been the centre of my life in so many situations e.g. motor accidents. I've always believed that I'm a 'cold fish', that I battle to express emotions and feel inadequate to express feelings properly. It's easier to tell my dog how much I love him than my family. I always feel that I'm making a poor job of expressing emotions. I'm feeling them very deeply but*



*expressing them is something else. In an argument I often retreat - into a shell and flip a switch, thus functioning very differently to normal.*

*Very aware of 'shutting down' when in arguments.... usually taken as disinterest by those involved. In an argument I often retreat onto 'a different plane'. Try to get emotion out of the air. This frustrates others because I'm so focussed on logic and 'the point'.*

*When emotions do get through - and that may be beyond my control - then it's like a release, a wave. Perhaps I then overcompensate.*

*It is almost automatic the flip the switch in some situations, it's a very sterile situation. Everything is clear and precise.*

Dave Stedman (Lieutenant Rhodesian Bush War)

As you read Dave's experience, take a moment to reflect on whether this resonates with you.

The majority of veterans as well as their partners (my wife would also probably be looking at me at this point) talk about their veteran as having a generally more muted emotional range. As Dave Stedman noted, veterans can come across as "cold", that they struggle to express emotions and feelings. They often describe their frustrations around the emotional disengagement that can occur in the face of potential conflict or arguments.

To the partners of veterans - consider the following:

- 1) The Military is a highly regulated Tribe that apart from aggression and focus, does not generally encourage excessive displays of emotion, whether it is fear, sadness etc. Self-discipline, containment and endurance take precedence over feelings such as vulnerability, fear, sadness, anxiety etc.
- 2) The very process of being conditioned to kill and manage combat requires the ability to switch off or mute the emotional response. This wiring does not necessarily rewire once transitioning to civilian life has taken place. Remember that the brain at War, does not differentiate between operational and civilian territory.

- 3) The impact of potentially any traumatic experiences can have a profound impact on emotional energy and mood. It is like an internal app that can capture the veteran's life force.
- 4) In over 16 years of sitting with Veterans, I have always been moved by the depth of feeling that at times surfaces. Veterans do feel deeply. They are, in their own way, deeply driven to connect.
- 5) On a positive side, Veterans generally have a deep sense of loyalty. They can be protective and manage diverse and challenging situations with focused intent. This is a bit of a generalization but if it works for you as you are reading this then great.
- 6) The transition to Civilian Life can be a bewildering, confusing and frustrating experience for Veterans as they attempt to locate themselves in community and redefine who they are as well as deal with the loss of who they were.
- 7) To you Veterans - your dial down can, with support, and a willingness to create change, become more of a dial up. Listening, communicating, expressing emotion and effectively coping with disagreement are not out of your potential skill set. The transitional journey is not just about redefining territory but also about learning new ways of operating emotionally. The ability to progress forward with this demands the ability to communicate honestly and respectfully with each other. It helps if whatever is said can be received not as criticism but an attempt to create shared territory and connection.

To Warriors and their partners - a usefully resource would be "The 5 Languages of love Military Edition" by Gary Chapman.

MEMORIES SHARED  
**BUT NEVER**  
**SPOKEN. TWO**  
GENERATIONS AT WAR.

[WWW.BARRYZWORESTINE.COM](http://WWW.BARRYZWORESTINE.COM)



## “Brothers”

Side by side  
They sat on the bench  
One fresh from war  
The other, weary and aged from battles long since passed.  
Brothers  
United by the rites of combat  
Both sharing  
Common memories  
Memories of friends long gone  
Grief  
Buried deeply  
Pain  
Carried day by day through the  
Long  
Dark  
Nights  
Pain that has no end  
Hearts stretched to breaking point  
Eased only by temporary numbing  
Stories spoken  
But far more  
Far more  
Remain silent  
Etched into the marrow of their bones  
Like acid  
Eating away  
At any trace of happiness or peace  
Haunted  
Nights filled with the screams of brothers  
The smell of blood  
Still fresh to taste in memory  
Burnt



Broken  
Impossible to comprehend  
One old, one young  
Bound forever by the invisible  
Wounds of war  
Yet both share  
A yearning  
A yearning  
To return to a time when we were  
Warriors  
Brothers  
Respect and trust were given  
Both bonded together so  
Intimately  
That they would  
Sacrifice their lives  
For one another  
A brotherhood of warriors  
Grieving for a time of feeling  
Alive  
Connected  
Powerful  
Now lost  
Abandoned in a world of unpredictability  
Where men will destroy fellow men  
Where trust and respect are sold for  
Lies and deception  
Streets  
Shopping malls  
Are now the battleground  
The enemy feels everywhere  
Random  
Chaos  
The battles may be past  
But the war within lives  
On and

On  
And on  
New battles fought every day in  
Dreams  
Relationships  
Alcohol  
Battles that have no respect for age or gender  
Side by side they sit  
Brothers  
Bound together  
In the silence of their  
Grief and pain.

## THE LETTER



Many veterans over the years have talked about how difficult it was for them to communicate with their families. Often, I would find myself supporting them to create a script. I eventually wrote the letter below as something veterans could use to structure their thoughts and communication. Feel free to modify, add, and delete so that this fits what you want to say. Let the other person read it first, and then see if you can make the bridge into verbal communication.

## Letter from one veteran to another (Veteran, Friend, Partner etc.)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

*Even though too much of where I've been and what I've seen cannot be spoken, and even though my present feels like such a struggle at times, both for you and me, I remain a proud veteran who still believes in loyalty and who's willing to put my life on the line for others. Many felt as if my brain still remained on the battlefield. The sound of a car backfiring became the enemy coming in contact with me. Hitting the ground may have been a joke to you and others, but to me it was life and death. The flashbacks felt all too real, and every corner was a potential ambush. I know that insisting that I sit in restaurants with my back against the wall was difficult for you to understand, or that trying to talk to me in a shopping centre when I was scanning everyone walking past was irritating. I know that at times you felt that after all these years, I should have moved on.*

*I wish things were that simple, as I was also desperate to move on. But every day was another day at war: of being vigilant and of struggling with depression, stress, anxiety, grief, and trauma. For me there has been no escape. My nights are full of nightmares, and my days find me wanting to escape to safety and silence. I've not given the best of myself to you all, and I've never rested well with this.*

*I know you've struggled with the bonds I still have with the soldiers I served and that, at times, this bond has felt more connected than the bond I have with you. I know you've felt frustrated by my refusal to talk about that time of my life. It's not that I don't want to share; it's that I can't. There are things that I've never talked about and that haunt me every day of my life. These are memories that I don't even share with other veterans. But I also have memories that I can't share with anyone who hasn't been there. In the past, I've tried to talk to civilians, but the look in their eyes showed me how difficult—in fact impossible—it was for them to understand me. I know my silence has hurt you, and for that I am sorry. It isn't personal. I know you've said that you're willing to listen, and I've been grateful for that, but these are stories that I cannot share with you. Please understand.*

*At times, it feels as if I have a room full of memories that I've locked away not only from others but from myself. They still have an effect on me—on my mood, my sleep, and my ability to connect with others. But I know and feel that my deepest fear is*



*that if I ever began to open this box, I wouldn't be able to control what would come out. It's hard enough just dealing with the surface of it all.*

*My promise to you is that I will do whatever it takes to become a better partner, parent, and friend. I know that the ways I've tried to cope with the memories and experiences haven't always served me and others well. I'm willing to look at what I can do to heal and find more peace. Please try not to judge or push me into change. It's hard enough for me to begin to open up to my suffering, grief, and anger.*

*My moods have never been easy for you. I have times when, for no apparent reason, I feel on edge, or I simply feel really down. Again, this is not personal. What I need is some time and space just to be alone to catch my breath.*

*I am grateful for the years in which you've stood by me and done your very best to support me, even when I behaved in ways that made life difficult for you. They say that there's no such thing as an unwounded warrior. We were young then, and we felt immortal. We never understood the price we would eventually pay for everything we did, saw, and experienced.*

*Age has not diminished the pain. If anything, the pain has only become more intense. But I am willing to change.*



Here I will detail a number of tools I have used with Veterans and myself over the years. These tools are all gathered from different approaches whether they be phone apps or very exciting brain-based activities. You may prefer some to others and if none catch your attention then it will be up to you to find and use other tools. I cannot strongly reinforce your commitment to action, no matter how small the steps may be.

I generally keep these tools simple and limited in number as too much choice can be overwhelming. The goal is for you, through trying these out, to experience change and relief which is not always only governed by professions you may be seeing. Again, just to stress that these tools are not a stand-alone. It is meant to accompany you and support you while you continue to address your issues with relevant professionals. I also encourage you to discuss these tools with them and ensure they are OK with you using them. They may also learn a thing or two as well.

The tools below are all body based. Whatever you have been through is in your body- the emotions and feelings, as well as the memories. Whatever is in the body is in the brain and vice versa. We cannot separate them out or lock them off from each other. Think about being on operations - you did not just rely on a map and compass to guide you through the territory. You also relied on your body-intuition, feeling something was not right. Combining both could make you more effective and more able to survive. To ignore one or the other could potentially negatively impact on achieving your objective.

## THE TOOLS

**1. First come the basic lifestyle changes** - nutrition, diet and exercise. You may have complex trauma or struggles with stress, depression and anxiety. I strongly encourage you to contact Veteran services, your Doctor, a Psychologist or any other appropriate professional. While doing this, the tools following may also be of use.

**2. Tapping/EFT** - Soon after I was trained in this modality, I had a veteran attend his meeting with me. He was very freaked, anxious, uptight and stressed. I asked him if he was willing to try out some fairly weird stuff with me. I talked

him through what we would be doing. He checked in to see there were no cameras in the room and that I was not trying to pull a fast one on him! We worked on the tapping sequence for 15 minutes after which I asked him how his SUDS were (he initially noted them as being 100/10). I remember him looking at me with an expression of sheer disbelief. He noted that he could not believe how calm and back in his body he was feeling. On another occasion I was working with a fellow Rhodesian Veteran overseas. He took to the tapping and made it a part of his daily discipline. Within a few months he was describing significant reduction of symptoms.

Tapping has been described as acupuncture without needles. It involves identifying and verbalizing whatever is currently impacting on you while tapping on specific points on the body. What appears to be happening is that by identifying and verbalizing the situation, for example, "feeling really stressed and overwhelmed at work" you open up the memory banks in the brain. As soon as you pull the file, it accesses any feelings or emotions attached to that memory. Tapping appears to work on resolving the connection between the difficult emotion and the memory. This can then get you to a point of remembering the situation but no longer experience the strength of the emotion.

Remember that when you are overwhelmed and stressed, blood flow to the front of the brain is reduced. It is therefore often almost impossible to think clearly and make effective decisions and judgement. Just to stress that Tapping is not a cure for everything, and it is not something I would recommend you using on your own when it comes to complex and traumatic memories. However, it can impact on stress, frustrations, anger, anxiety, sleep to name but a few.

What I like about Tapping is that when the folk I see leave my room, they have a tool they can use. Tapping is used with Veterans all over the world. Have a look at the following links, then discuss this with the professionals supporting you then decide whether you want to give it a go. These links are from Brad Yeats. He explains Tapping well and has numbers of clips you can tap along with him. Well worth the look.



<https://youtu.be/JiD72cZ5mcU>

<https://youtu.be/9BjKZOV9pzs>

Once you are familiar with Tapping, there is a great site (more military driven) that allows you to be more creative. The website describes what they do as follows-

*“**BATTLE TAP** is an easy-to-learn self-help tool that is designed for armed public service professionals who are experiencing emotional or psychological distress. It’s based on Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), an emerging intervention that uses acupuncture-point tapping, re-exposure, and cognitive scripts to rapidly resolve undesired emotions and memories”.*

<http://battletap.org/home.aspx>

I often describe Tapping as a great daily pull through.

**3. BREATHING** - here are a few excellent breathing resources:

**Mobile Apps:**

<http://t2health.dcoe.mil/apps/breathe2relax>

<http://t2health.dcoe.mil/apps/tactical-breather>

These phone apps have generally been received well. There are other resources on this site that you can also look at.

**Dr Weil 4-7-8 breathing:**

<https://www.drweil.com/videos-features/videos/the-4-7-8-breath-health-benefits-demonstration/>

Dr Weil’s website also has other resources you may find useful.

## **HeartMath quick coherence breathing:**

<https://youtu.be/sKmKKCdnJ4U>

I like the HeartMath quick coherence breathing technique because it is discreet. Tapping on a bus, train or in a shopping center could have some interesting results. This technique is great if you find yourself stressing out in a situation with another. A useful tip before or while breathing—drink or sip cold water as this can also change the blood flow in the brain.

## **5 Minute Energy Routine:**

I came across this a while ago and suspended my “this is weird thought” and gave it a go. I personally really like them, and they make me feel great and back in my body.

See how you go:

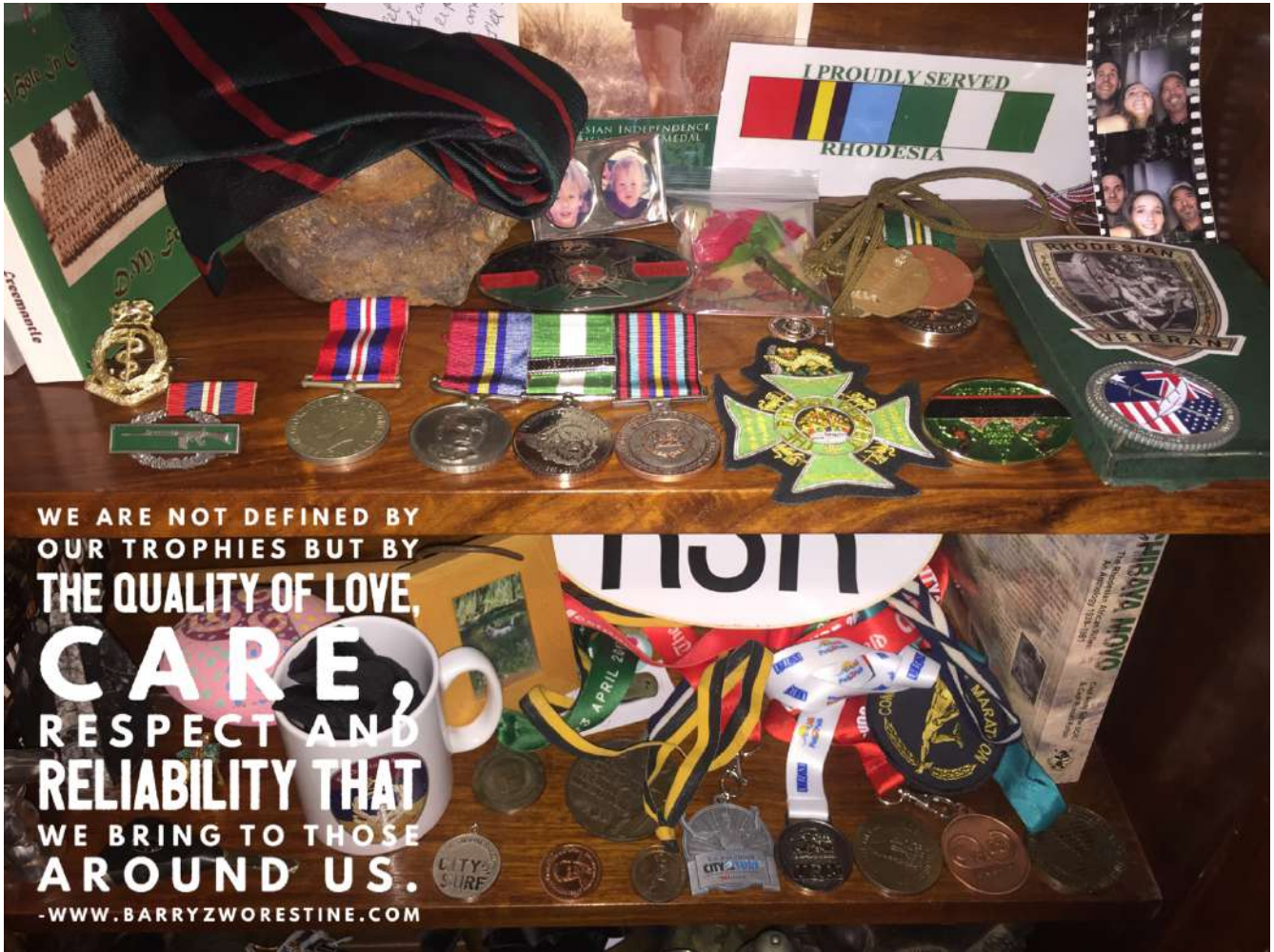
[https://youtu.be/d8uDI0\\_T5QI](https://youtu.be/d8uDI0_T5QI)

## **Yin Yoga App:**

I have never been enthusiastic about Yoga. I just don't bend. I have run marathons and ultra-marathons and was a gymnast at school. But never stretched. A short while ago a Veteran I was working with (also a long-distance runner) suggested that I may want to give Yin Yoga a try out. I down loaded the app and began to creak and groan into the positions. I have persevered over the months. My most profound and unexpected experience was how relaxed, and, in my body, I feel after the sequence. It now forms part of my regular “pull through” routine. Again, please consult with an appropriate professional before giving this a go. You may have health issues and you may also need a more controlled class.

<http://www.yin-yoga.se/en/2016/04/01/my-yin-yoga-app/>

Just to note that if the links are not accessible from this book, they can be found on my website under—Blogs—Tools ([www.barryzworestine.com](http://www.barryzworestine.com)).



WE ARE NOT DEFINED BY  
OUR TROPHIES BUT BY  
THE QUALITY OF LOVE,  
**CARE,**  
RESPECT AND  
RELIABILITY THAT  
WE BRING TO THOSE  
AROUND US.  
-WWW.BARRYZWORESTINE.COM

## 11 PROTOCOLS FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS AND COACHES WORKING WITH VETERANS AND CURRENT SERVING

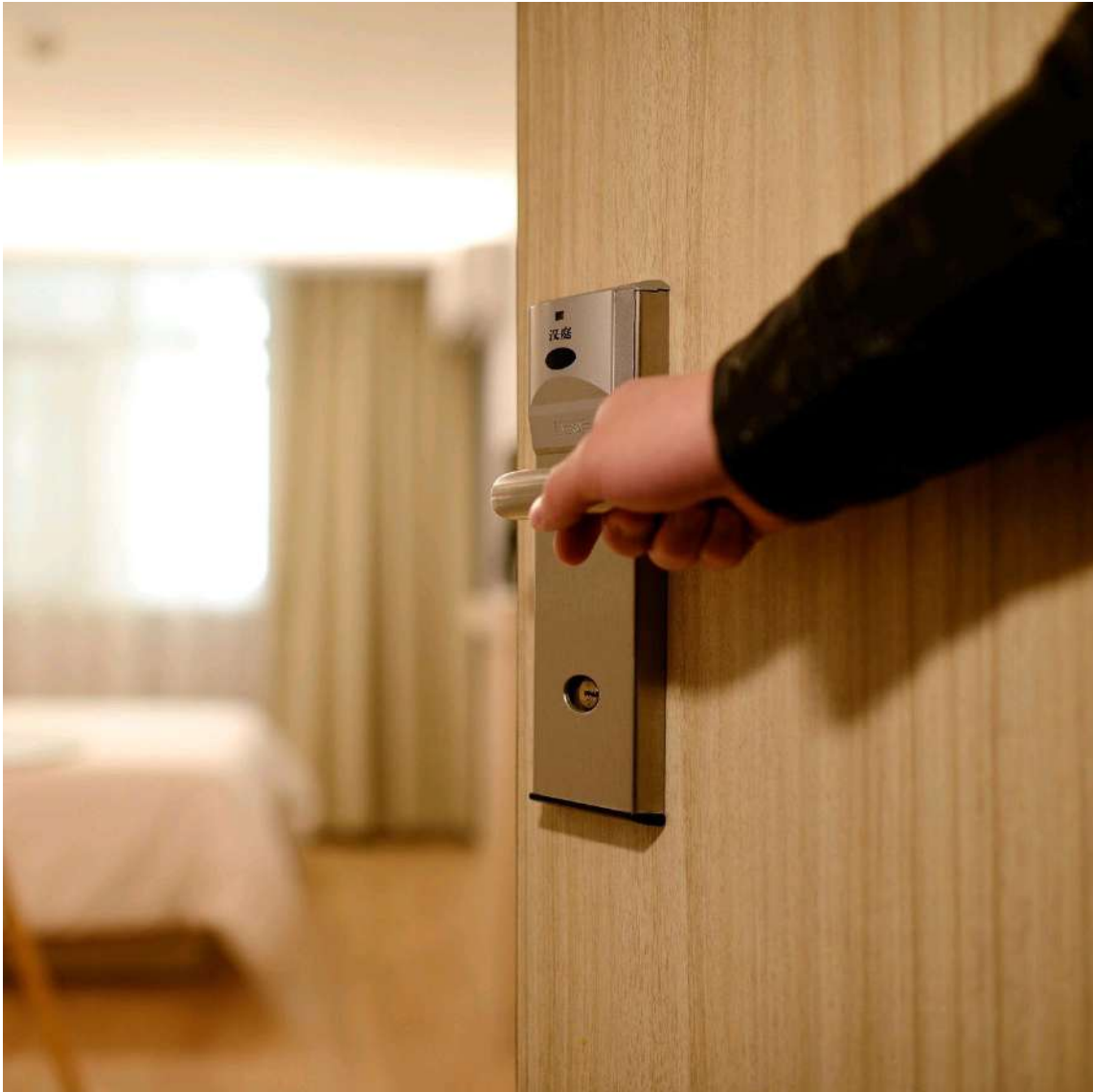


1. You first need to take time to educate yourself about Veterans and their territory. Ignorance will not get you through their front door.
2. Demonstrate trust and respect through being informed and understanding their language.



3. Ask yourself whether you are planning to be a part of the problem or a collaborative solution.
4. Listen and learn before you try preaching and teaching.
5. Assess your modalities you use. All veterans are different. One size does not fit all. Simply using one “evidence based” modality with a one size fit all approach is not going to work.
6. Try leaving your professional ego at the door. Get real. Get human.
7. Don’t expect compliance to what you think is best practice. You haven’t earned the right to rank.
8. Degrees may equal smart, but your behavior and presence may still be stupid. Who you are and the informed care and respect you demonstrate mean everything.
9. Who you are is more important than what you do. Sort out your people skills if necessary.
10. A veteran entering your room is entitled to sit facing wherever he wishes. Move or vacate your chair if needed.
11. Trauma is in the brain and body. Think about extending your training and skill set to include Brain, Body and Neuroscience based understanding and modalities. Veterans are flexible and adaptable and will expect the same from you.

## 7 THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING ON ENTERING INTO COUNSELLING TERRITORY



1. Any journey is first based on trust and respect. Take time to assess and work on your connection. Ask questions. Observe reactions. Is this someone you can work with?

2. Just as much as you maintain situational awareness in operations so too can you take time to assess this territory. You are under no obligation to open up any areas of your life until you are ready to.

3. Unlike the military power hierarchy, the title and qualifications of the health professional need not imply your compliance. You may be asked to go straight to your most traumatic memory. You have choice, power and the right to say no if this is your truth. You have the right to choose what you want to begin working on.

4. In the military, the territory determines the method. Ask about the modalities offered. If there are only one or two do not be seduced by the “evidence based” label. The fewer the modalities the more potentially restrictive the framework.

5. Just because a professional presumes that they know what you need does not mean they are right. Exercise your right to question.

6. Assess whether the professional understands the military mind. Can you choose where you want to sit in the room?

7. Exercise your right to identify and communicate any behavior or communication that you are uncomfortable with.

## FINAL WORDS

*“Are the choices you are making feeding the problem or the solution? Is your behavior opening or closing opportunities for success, well-being and connection? Is the vision of your tomorrow reflected in the reality of today?”*

*Allow your present moment to be tempered and guided by your goals. Introspection, reflection and responsibility will create a strong bridge between your present and your future. Don't settle for your yesterday. Your past personal best is simply an opportunity to excel. Get up and commit to being better, stronger, faster, more compassionate and connected, respectful and caring. Do not allow your past to define you. Complacency rests on this formula.*

*Every moment, step and word should be conscious, focused with discipline and motivation to make your tomorrow today's target. Disappointment is only an opportunity to get up, dust off and learn. What are you waiting for? The world and others in it are not waiting with bated breath for you to arrive. To move from where you currently are will take planning, training, learning, discipline, focus and work and even then, there are no iron clad guarantees.*

*It will be based on your willingness to step into the void- the place between leaving and arriving- and stay coherent and focused no matter what. You will need to adjust and adapt as you move”.*

I wish you all a successful transitioning into your new territory.

Thank you for reading “Which Way is your Warrior Facing”.

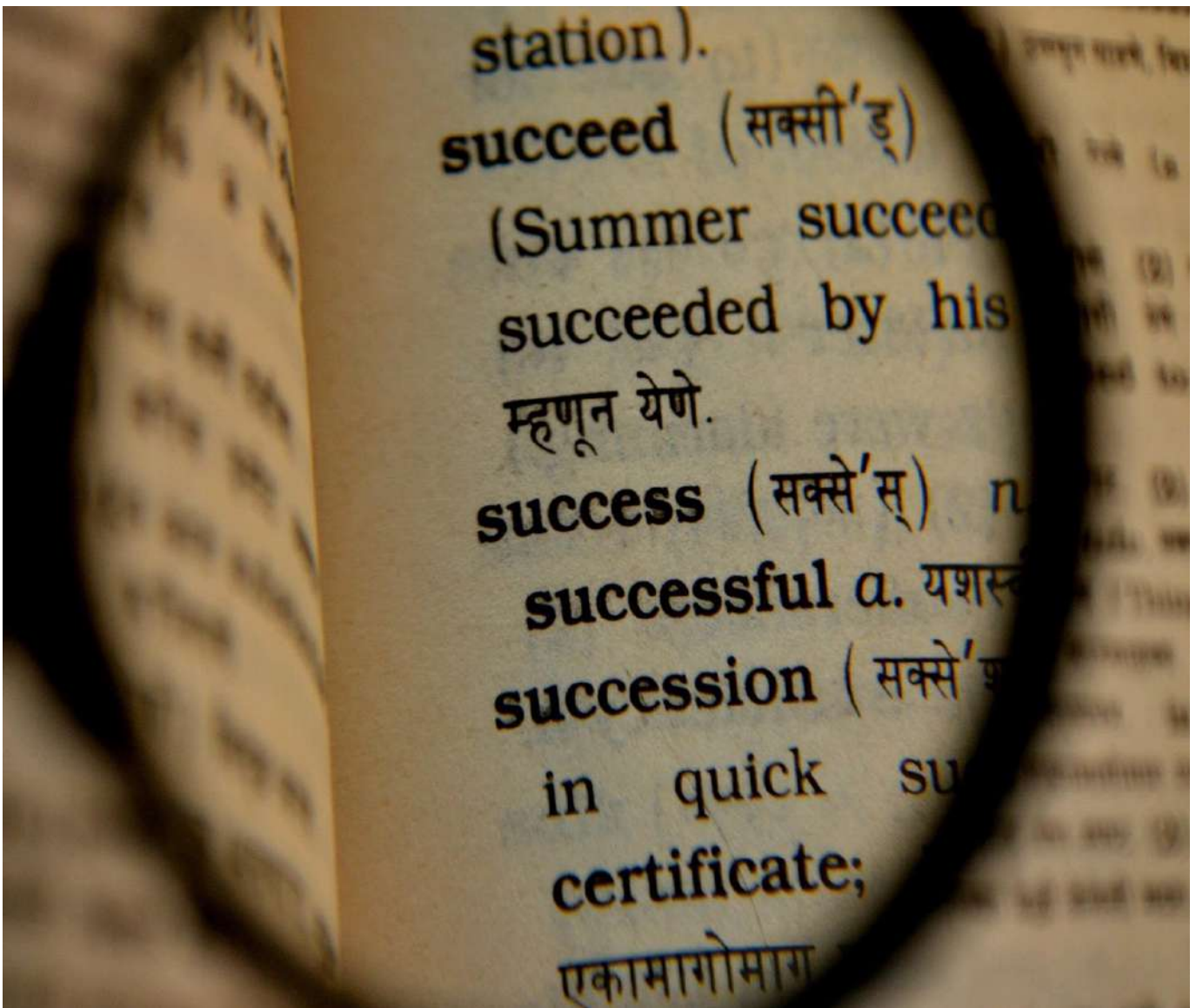
Thank you for your service.

With respect and care.

**Barry**



## GLOSSARY



**Claymore:** a Claymore mine, introduced for use in the US Army, is an aimable antipersonnel device that when detonated shoots metal balls into the kill zone of an ambush; it was named for the claymore, a two-handed sword used in medieval Scotland.

**Cock, hook, and look:** an immediate action drill to assess and then clear a cartridge stuck in the breech of a weapon.

**Contact:** the action of becoming engaged with the enemy.

**Fire force:** the deployment of helicopters both to place troops on the ground in a "contact" (see above) and to engage from the air with weapons; the military tactic was developed during the Rhodesian Bush War.

**Friendly fire:** fire from a soldier's own side that can result in injury or death.

**HE:** high-explosive grenade.

**IED:** improvised explosive device.

**MAG:** machine gun.

**OP:** observation post.

**Pull-through:** the action of pulling an oily rag through the barrel of a rifle in order to clean it.

**R&R:** rest and recuperation.

**Rat pack:** ration packs.

**Runaway gun:** a situation in which a weapon continues to fire on its own volition and is no longer in the control of the person firing it.

**Stoppage:** when a weapon fails to fire, often as a result of it not being cleaned.

**Trip flare:** a flare used as a warning device; it is attached to a wire that, when pulled, triggers the flare.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



After serving in the Rhodesian Bush War, psychologist and author Barry Zworestine realized that he and his fellow soldiers had been forever changed by what they had seen and experienced. After years of practicing constant vigilance and readiness, they were emotionally exhausted. Zworestine began working with Veteran Services in Australia in 2002.



Zworestine discovered that many soldiers would either turn their “claymore mine” inward or outward. Inward meant swallowing all the emotional turmoil until they couldn’t take it. Outward meant releasing that turmoil in front of others. Both situations were unsustainable and toxic.

Zworestine shows you how to unload your burden in an emotionally healthy way. You can lean on your loved ones for support without pushing them away or causing them pain. Zworestine helps you get rid of the claymore entirely and find better coping mechanisms to ease the transition to civilian life.



Barry Zworestine was born and raised in Rhodesia. He served in the Rhodesian Bush War in 1976 and understands the trauma soldiers carry with them from the battlefield. Zworestine became a trained clinical psychologist and educationalist and works to support Australian veterans and those who are current serving, as well as veterans of the Rhodesian Bush War all over the world.

Zworestine is married with three children. He currently lives in Australia and enjoys running and playing the didgeridoo in his spare time.

## BITE SIZED WISDOM FOR TRANSITIONING WARRIORS

**I have included these easily digested chunks of wisdom for you to return to from time to time and draw on for inspiration as you transition between territories. I hope that they will inspire and support you.**

---

From operations to civilian life, it takes motivation, determination, and an ability to manage discomfort as well as adjust and adapt.

---

Change does not come to us. What it requires is the willingness to hunt for it, fight and sweat for it. Warriors understand this. No matter how great your wounds, pain and grief remember who you were and still are. Get up, dust off and start running. Cross the finishing line and take a well earned break.

---

We are all capable of choosing what our internal weather is that we bring to the challenges around us. It takes work, but hey, hard work never killed anyone.

---

You were willing to crawl through the mud to become a Warrior. The same mindset applies to crawling through the burdens you carry. Like the mud and the strain, they will wash off as you lighten and heal.

---

Your struggle does not define who you are. Let go of self- judgement. Your pain and grief are understandable. No matter how tough it may be there are those out there willing to stand by you.

---

There will be moments, events, occasions and situations where your grief will knock on your door. Listen and open your heart. Those no longer with us are reaching out to be remembered. Take a moment and feel. You are not alone.

---

The Wounded Warrior has the right to return stronger and wiser. But only if the healing journey is approached with the strong will, focus, determination and discipline that already exist within the Warrior. Your wars need not determine who you are. That is within your power. Step into, not away from your return.

---

Your Warrior has the capability for courage, endurance, dependability, loyalty, reliability, care and love. Allow these to continue to guide you forward in everything you do and all of who you are.

---

There is a room both in your brain (memories) and body where all the pain, loss, grief, despair and anger is stored. It may be 50 years old or recent, but it lurks in the shadows of your heart. It whispers to you in the early hours of the morning. It cannot be forgotten, silenced or locked away. It feels real in the present however rather try and see it as energy stored in your body. It needs to talk to you. It needs to be listened to and it needs to come to the surface of your heart and heal. Yes, it can be a painful journey, but healing takes courage and commitment. Better to feel than to numb out or push down. This journey down into the roots of your memory cannot be done on your own. Asking for help is a sign of strength. Clear the roots that are tangled and struggling, and you will grow stronger. Your heart will open, and your body will heal.

---

You should not be leaving your Warrior behind as you transition into Civilian life. Yes, you need to learn to adjust and adapt to civilian territory, but the core values of the Warrior and the wisdom gained from the military not only will inform and guide the civilian part of you but will make you a better Man or Woman. Who you were can and should become a part of who you are now. It should not be about getting stuck in the past but allowing the past to inform your present.

---

Everyone, not just Veterans, have a room or rooms filled with explosive devices (the stored and reactive parts of ourselves) that can get triggered resulting in damage to others and ourselves. This need not define who we are. We are not our trauma. We can learn to self-regulate and heal. Who is currently running your show- your grenade or you?

---



It is the most understandable experience to feel trapped by your trauma. It feels etched into your bones. It intrudes into every corner of your waking a sleeping life. It is natural that you want to just escape and avoid. But we know the brain can be rewired. We know that your painful memories, your trauma, grief, anger, loss and guilt can be allowed to speak and heal. The healed Warrior returns with great strength, compassion, wisdom and heart. Call in who you were to support you to begin this journey. Small steps (sleep, nutrition and exercise) lead to bigger steps. Allow your body to heal. It has a wisdom and is waiting to walk with you.

---

Once a year Veterans and current serving gather to march and remember. Once a year Warriors emerge and stand proud as they are respected and welcomed. May your next 364 days be your own personal March to heal where you begin to integrate who you were then and who you are now. Respect to you all for the courage and commitment to make your peace with whatever you carry.

---

Understandably, so many Veterans avoid getting close to the core experiences that impact on their lives. However, waiting for change to just appear and work its "magic" is generally not going to happen. Nor is expecting the stuff locked away in those rooms inside you to clear out on their own volition. However, you do not need to go crashing into the killing ground of your trauma. Step back to the perimeter. Identify something or somewhere you can begin (with appropriate support) that has some charge but feels manageable. That charge may be challenging but its just old energy sitting in your body. Slowly as you progress you will rediscover your strength and confidence around entering this territory. As you feel yourself heal and grow stronger you will be readier to open those doors and clear those rooms. Combine this with self-care, life balance and appropriate techniques and "pull throughs" as well as professional support, you can and are able to regather your Warrior and adjust to the challenges in your life. Waiting is not an option for Warriors!

---

So many veterans feel displaced and disconnected within and around themselves. You need not lose your identity as a warrior or Veteran, and you can find ways to adjust to and navigate through civilian life and find meaning. Stay fit and strong-challenge yourself. Veterans with operational injuries increasingly demonstrate the power of their indomitable spirit and will. Let your Warrior enter your new territory.

---

Your drive to heal comes from here. Re-member and re-gather who you were and integrate this with who you now are.

---

For those that carry the burden of war or trauma, yes there is the journey of healing but remember to find time to play and connect with others. What are you going or willing to do this week to just have some fun?

---

How you transition into civilian life will be determined by your ability to track your progress- your wellbeing, mental state, impact on others and use of pull through tools. If you ignore the tracks you make you could be heading into your own ambush. At regular intervals, stop and think about how you are doing. This is no different to your operational skills set.

---

Over the years I have worked with Veterans who struggle with not feeling good enough. They either were never given an operational posting or were in non-combatant positions. They are haunted and feel diminished by this. A veteran should not be defined or restricted to specific roles. The very act of joining the military places you in the territory. Stand tall. Wear your medals with pride.

---

You may be facing a number of challenges. Your connections with others may be thin on the ground. How you are reacting to what is facing you may be negatively impacting on others. Let's acknowledge that you are travelling through difficult terrain but let's also hold the possibility that you need not add to this by judging yourself. This is just deadweight. You are not defined by where you currently are. Begin by committing to small change and self-care. You can respect and care for who you are no matter how deep you are in the mud. Every positive thought over time will and does create neural change. Remember that you may not readily change your situation, but you can determine your internal weather that you bring to what is in front of you. We do not often simply glide into change. We may creak, groan, stretch or dance into change. It can be challenging and exciting. Be willing to step out of your safe zone, especially if that zone is detrimental to your wellbeing. Chase and hunt change if this is necessary. If life is about to double tap

you then move to new and better territory. It's a process so stay focused, maintain your situational awareness and leap into new beginnings.

---

Life may at times feel like a SF selection course, however, at least with life you have the possibility of looking at the "rocks" you carry on your back pack and assess what is dead weight and what you are willing to let go of. There will be rocks that you can take out and drop on the side of the track. These just demand a conscious decision to let go or change (an old grievance, lack of exercise). Then there are those rocks that you will need some support with (anxiety, stress, anger). And finally, there are those rocks you will need comprehensive management with (Complex PTSD, self-harm). Locate and identify the most accessible rock. Start with one. As your load lightens, your energy and motivation, confidence and self-esteem will improve. Have a good day and keep rocking.

---

Although we can never return to who we were, we can grow into who we are and/can be- really fine, wise and strong Veterans and Warriors. Don't give up on yourself. Don't let what is out there beat you down. Fight for who you are and what you need. Carry those who are down. Leave no wounded behind. Draw on the collective strength and resources of your tribe.

---

No matter how difficult the journey may feel at times, it's important to remember that there is a beginning and ending to everything. Giving up is never an option. If you need to sit, then do so, but then get up, dust off and keep moving. Pace yourself. Allow others to support you. Find friends who will encourage you. Strengthen your will through discipline and effort. The right attitude plus appropriate support will get you across the finishing line

---

As much as discipline, focus, effort and commitment are critical to create change, so too is your need to rest, chill out and sleep. Good sleep is critical for wellbeing, brain functioning and ensuring you have the resources and energy to move forward.

---

Reach out when you need to. Take a risk and offer an open hand. There's never a guarantee. But you may be surprised by what you receive.

---

Sometimes you just need to find a quiet place in nature, away from the chaos and the noise and share a moment of connection with a mate.

---

If life was a Special Forces selection process, guilt would be the dead weight that we load on ourselves. It weighs us down. It has no value. It prevents healing and haunts our waking and sleeping lives. It messes with our relationships and health. Time to open that backpack and chuck those "guilt rocks". Create space to work on the real stuff that is waiting to talk to you.

---

My greatest moments have been my toughest moments. Whether it was in running or challenging life changes and painful losses. There were many moments where there was nothing I could do to change or remove what was in front of me. The only control I had was around self-care at every level and working on my attitude to what was in front of me. For those of you that are facing painful loss, adversity and challenge, try not to neglect yourself and work on your attitude. Go slow. Letting go of yourself is letting go of life.

---

There are three approaches to living your life. Using the analogy of the ancient grain grinding stones, there are three possibilities. The first is with avoidance. Here the grinding wheels do not meet. They simply turn, and the grain remains the same. Nothing transforms. The second is conflictual, reactive, aggressive. Here the wheels grind so closely that they destroy the grain and the stone. Living life in this way will only negatively impact on others and yourself. The third way is to live life with just the right amount of tension and grinding that it positively transforms. Here you constructively speak your truth, listen, respect and set appropriate boundaries. You do not run away from challenges or adversity. Keep your wheels turning. Grind with care.

---

Are you getting caught up in small inconsequential issues? Are you wasting energy on the Little Rock's instead of dealing with the big issues in your life? Why? Watch

what you focus on because that's where the limited energy you have will go. Are you avoiding the big rocks? Life can really rock at times. Just think about which ones you put into and carry in your emotional back pack.

---

Overwhelm, stress and anxiety kick up the back of the brain and lock you into your ambush zone. This can result in your trip flare going and your claymore blowing. There will be casualties. Take time to breathe and use your pull through tools to get blood flowing to the front of your brain and allow you to navigate away from your killing ground to your OP where you can think and organize your thoughts and behavior.

---

Others may not support or affirm your dreams or your vision. Trust whatever it is that drives you forward. Others may join you on the way but be willing and able to sustain your effort and motivation. Whether you achieve your goal or birth your vision, know that you stood firm. If you need to take a break, remember to get up, dust off and begin again.

---

It's not whether we cross the finishing line but whether we fully commit to trying to make the impossible possible. Others may not support or affirm your dreams or your vision. Trust whatever it is that drives you forward. Others may join you on the way but even without them, be willing and able to sustain your effort and motivation.

---

Allow time to feel. Respect and attend to your grief or anger. But mind you do not become stuck in being a victim. These emotions are energy in your body that need to move. While you are going through this don't neglect life balance and wellbeing. Exercise can have an excellent impact. At the same time pay attention to what you do have that you can show gratitude towards- even the small things count. Gratitude creates brain change and supports healing. Most off all watch for those self-destructive patterns- poor diet, no exercise and use of alcohol. Finally, whether you are moving into civilian territory, grieving the loss of a partner or being unemployed- you may be in new territory. To navigate through it you need to map out and understand this territory.

---



The core values of courage, mate ship, endurance and compassion will support you on your way to create change. On the way try the following—find someone to be responsible to; find others who will listen to and encourage you; strengthen your will through discipline and effort; fully commit to your right to create change and acknowledge that giving up will never be an option.

---

In running ultra-marathons, I learnt to not focus on the end goal. It was depressingly too far away in the distance. I learnt to focus on what I could see— one step at a time. One kilometer at a time. Each and every step was an achievement. Each and every step was a goal completed and an experience of motivating success. In your journey to change and/or heal, the same rules apply— small steps equal big achievements. Every step, every hill climbed adds to your motivational bank account. You will draw on this in your moments of hitting the wall. Today identify something you have been neglecting and that is achievable. Do it. Don't let another day pass. This weakens your resolve and erodes your will. One step at a time. Relax into the small achievements. Build on them and cross your own personal finishing line.

---

Think about one thing that is weighing you down— it may be connected to the emotions of anger, resentment, hurt, betrayal, grief. While thinking of the situation identify the emotion. Then locate where you feel it in your body. Rate how strong the body feeling is from 1-10. What is the shape and color of the body feeling? Now just stay with what's in your body. Respect and care for that experience. Don't judge it. Think about something that brings joy, love or care to your heart. Now gently breathe in and out through that body location and allow your breath to wash through and release the energy. Allow your body to release what only weighs you down. Breathe in and out gently for several minutes. Then close your eyes, take a deep breath and release. Let it go. Feel it go. Now reassess the body tension from 1-10. Any change?

---

Stay focused on your goal but have fun and enjoy your journey along the way.

---

All moments are gifts and deserve both gratitude and investment of time and presence. Think about the balance in your life. Is there anything you are neglecting

or ignoring? Decide what you are willing to do to invite more balance, connection, joy and wellbeing.

---

You would place your life on the line for another. Yet so many veterans tend to leave themselves behind when transitioning into civilian territory. You are under the same obligation to bring yourself back. Your trauma or your struggles are no different from others wounds. They deserve attention, support and care. The attributes that form who you are apply to yourself as well. Do whatever it takes. Go back. Give yourself a hand. Allow others to walk with you and return.

---

If you are stuck in a challenging situation or relationship try getting off the stage where it feels personal. Step into the audience and get some distance. Simply moving away from the emotional engagement can allow you to breathe and reframe. Distance can shrink the size and complexity of the issue. Find your own personal OP (observation point) and just observe.

---

It's ok about having a vision around where you want to go. But to achieve your goal, keep your eyes on the track. One step at a time. Each step defines you. It's not whether you cross the finishing line. It's not whether you get to see the sunrise. It's about your commitment and dedication to each and every step.

---

You may be feeling stuck, but your body can always move. You may be feeling helpless and trapped in a challenging situation. Step back and go into your body - run, walk, stretch, yoga- you'll find it easier to then face and adjust and adapt to the issue at hand.

---

There are moments where we can feel desperately imprisoned whether it be in a relationship, work, life or in our bodies. In these moments we can experience a sense of life and situation closing down and totally restricting any sense of personal freedom and choice. We may be holding the bars of our prison staring out into possibility and life. However, what we fail to recognize often is that the door may seem locked but if we reached into our back pocket, we will find a key. This key can

open the door of our prison which strangely enough was never locked. There is always some freedom of choice. You may not be able to exit your situation, but you can work on changing your attitude to what is facing you. Fear is an attitude. It's not to say that choice is easy. Walking away, speaking your truth and releasing fear although seeming impossible can be achieved. By holding that we contain the key to personal freedom, change and transformation can take us from feeling a victim to feeling empowered. Reach into your back pocket and simply hold the key. Feel its weight and possibility. At least now you have shifted attitude to hold the experience of choice and empowerment.

---

There may be times through adversity that your fire dies down. You may put on weight after always being fit. Your mood may impact on your lifestyle and mental state. It's easy to slide downhill but so much harder to climb back out and return to who you were. Your internal fire feeds your will and determination to change.

Carefully feed your fire. Get down and up close. One twig at a time, one achievable action and goal at a time. Small breaths will fan the flames. Too much too early will put them out. Build on your successes as you reignite.

---

The only difference between verbal and physical aggression is the damage that is visible. Both are experienced as a frontal assault at the deepest parts of oneself. Whatever you have been through and whatever your wounds, they can never be an excuse for lack of control. Through personal responsibility to create change and the power of the brain to heal, there is always choice even if it means removing yourself for a while and doing the work. The ability to exercise self-control and constraint defines the Warrior whether you are military, civilian, male or female.

---

It's not always about putting the other first whether this be with a friend or a partner. There will always need to be those moments when we stop to take care of our own needs. This will call for clear boundaries. If we treat our lives as an open-door restaurant, it will be filled only with those needing to feed, not to connect. And when all the supplies and food are gone, they will simply move off. Healthy relationships should have a rights of admission reserved sign over the doorway. Like any restaurant there have to be times when you close door and become your number one customer. All relationships thrive on this simple principal because it is

only when our bellies are full that we have the resources to care for and support others. Today, take a moment to make yourself your own valued number one.

---

Are the choices you are making feeding the problem or the solution? Is your behavior opening or closing opportunities for success, well-being and connection? Is the vision of your tomorrow reflected in the reality of today? Allow your present moment to be tempered and guided by your goals. Introspection, reflection and responsibility will create a strong bridge between your present and your future.

---

Warrior attributes are in many ways in short supply in civilian territory. It is no wonder that veterans struggle to adapt when transitioning away from the military. It is not simply their responsibility alone to adjust and adapt. In turn, civilian territory needs to have a critical look at the values and attributes that guide it forward.

---

You learnt to operate in the military. Remember that you were initially challenged to adjust to a more regimented life. You had to take on and learn new skills. You had to re-form a new identity. All these skills apply to transitioning to civilian life. However, this time round you have the core attributes and values of the Warrior to drive you forward. There will be challenges as you adjust, adapt and form your new identity. Take your time. Maintain coms with those that can support you. Build a map to help you navigate. Maintain situational awareness and when in doubt go OP to observe your new territory. Everything you need to have to adjust is already within you.

---

Grief ignored numbs the heart, stills the capacity to feel and fires up anger. When a Warrior is willing and ready to feel, to remember and to grieve, only then do the doorways to his heart open and bring the beginning of peace and resolution. It is through feeling and grieving that the shadows of those lost are brought to life and affirmed. It is in this moment where the aching heart is allowed to be that a Warrior can stand tall by the fallen and listen and remember.

---

You would have laid down your life to protect a brother. At all times your focus was not on yourself but on the safety and wellbeing of your group. Reliability and Dependability were your core values. Transitioning into Civilian life is about maintaining those core values but also learning to direct them towards yourself. Whatever burdens you may be carrying, you need to be willing to acknowledge them and deal with them. You are as important as your Brothers around you. To successfully navigate through civilian territory, you will need to navigate through your own internal terrain. You've earned the right to carry yourself.

---

Encapsulating your trauma may feel like it protects you from your pain and memory. However, it increasingly disconnects you from yourself as well as those you love. Your healing is through that place and where necessary be guided by a professional. Your body wants to heal and feel, to love and connect. Start at the edges of this territory. Start where you feel ok to begin and tolerate the discomfort. One step at a time. It is worth it.

---

If it's not enough that we send Men and Women off to War and that they return carrying the burden of their experiences, they then return home having to fight another war with organizations that instead of easing their souls and bodies, increase their trauma. Lost, displaced and broken, highly intelligent, responsible and skilled Warriors wander the streets homeless. Many are stuck in menial work, lacking meaning and connection with Tribe. Many, out of desperation choose death. This is shameful and unacceptable. We need more organizations that uphold core values and care. Warriors have earned the right for a worthwhile life away from War. They have earned the right to stand proud and contribute in their new lives as civilians. They have earned the right for the financial benefits they deserve. We are fortunate to have them live and work amongst us.

---

Don't settle for your yesterday. Your past personal best is simply an opportunity to excel. Get up and commit to being better, stronger, faster, more compassionate and connected, respectful and caring. Do not allow your past to define you. Complacency rests on this formula. Every moment, step and word should be conscious, focused with discipline and motivation to make your tomorrow today's target. Disappointment is only an opportunity to get up, dust off and learn.



---

Adversity is simply an opportunity to reframe your attitude. It invites you to hold on to yourself and strive to rise above the moment. In these times through the willingness to walk through the fire we reform our core and redefine who we are.

---

Life journeys and transitioning out the Military can be a challenging experience as we navigate paths through relationships, work, finances and our connections with ourselves. To be able to identify at least one goal and adjust and adapt as needed gives both a point in the future to aim for as well as an inner compass in the present that directs our movement. A goal identified can also contain and ground us when our terrain suddenly changes or becomes confusing and unclear.

---

Whatever is stored in your body cannot be forgotten. Why still the voice of that deepest part of yourself? Re-remembering is not, nor should it be about re-traumatizing yourself. It's about allowing your body and brain to bring this voice to your awareness. In re-remembering we gently hold and feel both in memory and in the body the territory of the struggle, pain, loss and grief. Listen to your body. Meet that which is stored in your body with an openness and respect. Listen to the thoughts and feelings that arise. Greet them. Welcome them and care for them.

They are parts of who you are.

---

There have been long moments in my life when my world was in complete disarray. Breathing and meditating had little if any impact. What worked was to get back into my body and into nature—running and mountain-biking. In the company of trees, I was able to return to myself and a rhythm of connection. For any of you who are struggling to collect the pieces of your life—activate your body—yoga, Tai chi, running, walking and wherever possible connect with nature.

---

Asking for help is never a sign of weakness but rather strength. It is the realization that no matter how tough and resilient you are, that there are all points in one's lives where the territory we need to cross demands others to walk with us and watch our backs. This is the reason that we all have defined arcs of fire. Together we are more effective and successful. We cover the ground far more efficiently. You

do not just let go of your operating protocols when you face the challenges of adjusting to civilian life.

---

Not all psychologists, counsellors and other health care professionals have military and operational backgrounds. The academic training gives the tools but without taking the time to learn about the territory veterans occupy, unnecessary mistakes can be made. These can range from insisting that they sit in a designated chair in the room( which may not be facing the door), using modalities that despite the evidence supporting it may in fact cause more harm than good, and expecting that the title Psychologist has earned you the right to expect that the Veteran will simply hand over their stories, pain and traumatic memories to you without question. You may be the professional, but you need to listen and earn trust and respect. You need to extend your knowledge to understanding the road they have walked and be open towards a flexible approach to what you think they may need. You'll only be given one opportunity. Break that trust through a demonstration of ignorance based on not taking time to become informed, rigidity around your set modalities, and first earning your right to work with them- you will generally not be given a second chance.

---

The challenge in transitioning from Military to Civilian territory is to first identify your skill sets and strengths that can accompany you. It's not about leaving yourself behind. Assess the demands and challenges of this new territory. Consider the adjustments and adaptations that will be required. Identify new learning and new ways of operating that may not yet be within your circle of influence. Prepare and practice. Constantly reassess, reevaluate and adjust. Teamwork is critical!

---

Aiming for change requires clear focus. Visualize the change you are going to aim for. Maintain tension on the trigger- think, analyze, plan- you cannot achieve your target unless the tension around your motivation and critical thinking is present. This is not a time to sit back. Effort and discipline will guide you. Endurance and resilience will maintain the tension. Tension ensures an alertness and focus to detail. Define your arc of fire- your circle of influence - what you can impact on and what lies outside this territory. Be ready to adjust as other factors intrude. Flexibility not rigidity will ensure ongoing adaptation.

---

The majority of Veterans I have sat with over many years describe cycles of, at times for no apparent reason, of just feeling edgy and uncomfortable. In these moments being with others can feel overwhelming and irritating. Often trying to work out why can be a futile exercise. There are many boxes that can account for this feeling- the loss of military tribe, stretching into and adjusting to civilian life, the edges of traumatic memory, grief and pain making its way to the surface of your awareness, present day challenges, ageing and the loss of capability- these are just a few. Begin by just respecting the energy in your body. Bring your awareness to it. Feel what comes up. Open your heart. Let the tension, edginess and irritation in your body move- stretch, breath, exercise, yoga are some of the body based modalities you can use. Just let it move. Accept its presence. What do you need? - time out, some solitary space - communicate your needs so others don't take it personally. Don't judge your experience. Mind off and body awareness on. My sense over the years is that as Veterans we carry an app that takes that little bit more energy than others- if not attended to it can drain resources. Imaging the impact of constant hyper vigilance on the body? Begin with your body first. See how you go.

---

Excellence is defined by your willingness to exceed your perceived limitations. It is achieved by your acceptance and motivation to step out of your comfort zone. It is maintained by your capacity to process and transform the challenging and often stressful demands on you both physically, mentally and psychologically. It is not measured by ranking to others. This should not define or limit you. Every success is an invitation to become better. There are no failures, only opportunities to learn and improve. To achieve excellence and to excel does demand the ability to endure.

---

Team excellence has to be grounded in the ability and willingness to move away from the "Me" to "Us". Your own personal goals are now defined by how We excel and how We support each other into and through our zone of discomfort. In this process we form a strong tribe based on the group experience. This transformation is not only the collective glue for further achievement but also results in individual growth as we learn to move beyond our own agendas and adjust and adapt to the needs of others.

---

To successfully transition between thinking change and successfully doing change, our Intention needs to be clear and completely focused on the end goal. Intention fuels the ability to maintain movement in the face of adversity. It fuels our drive to settle for nothing less than what we desire. It sustains us in moments of doubt and despair and keeps us moving through the long dark night. Without the ferocity of intention, the fires of change burn low.

---

There will always be moments when the challenges facing us are not just about achieving our Personal Best but about Endurance. Endurance demands the ability to maintain focus and ongoing movement in the face of dwindling resources and exhaustion. In these moments it's not necessarily about excellence but about achieving excellence in the face of insurmountable demands as well as emotional, physical and psychological depletion. In these moments we stretch into a stronger and more confident sense of who we are. It is the nature of some transitions that they challenge our capacity to endure. No matter what you are facing now, just keep moving- run, walk, crawl- but move. In these moments' success is achieved by the refusal to be defined by the odds stacked up against you.

---

"I'm not motivated" is a very poor reason for not achieving your target.

---

It's your attitude not your situation that determines how you progress forward. Before you enter into change, take time to regroup and assess and identify the challenges ahead of you. Allow time for preparation at all levels- physically, psychologically and emotionally. When you finally commit to moving forward do so with focus and determination. Be flexible and willing to adjust and adapt as required. Your belief in yourself needs to be clear. When you finally commit to moving forward do so with focus and determination. Identify and release anything holding you back or to the past. Remember: ATTITUDE determines ALTITUDE!

---

Successful transitions rest not just on the ability to adjust your strengths to present challenges. These can face you with a difference in fit between where you were and where you currently are. To hold on to the past too tightly will restrict your capacity to open to your present. Every step of the journey will require adaptation

and flexibility. Change can be challenging. Your power lies in how you receive and perceive what is facing you. Becoming fully who you are is also about being willing to let's go of parts of who you were.

---

Transitioning from the Military to Civilian territory has a number of challenges that require attention : 1) Loss of Tribe and change in identity (2) Integrating the Warrior and the Civilian (3) Mapping out and understanding the military/operational brain - those parts that support you forward and those that can constrict and restrict (4) Mapping out your Civilian territory and re-calibrating and re-orientating your internal compass to facilitate effective navigation and resolution around adjustment challenges. (5) Remaining coherent and focused in the space between leaving and arriving- the long dark night of crossing over.

---

Life and others may at times face us with deeply challenging transitions and encounters. While we may not be able to change what is in front of us, we retain the power to decide how we receive these challenges. Are you or have you been giving your power away? We are not victims. Others cannot steal our power. We need to be willing to hand it over. No matter what you are facing now, think about your ability to reclaim the strength of who you are. Choose to stand in the storm with a certainty of self. Now, regardless of the outcome you are already a winner.

---

When facing challenging situations, we may often not have any control around changing the situation. It is as it is and faces us squarely head on. What we can impact on is our internal weather that we bring to this territory. However, this level of internal adaptability is not just restricted to our attitude. We can also shift perspective and step back, up and out- even if this is at symbolic level. Gaining some distance from the emotion, fear and overwhelm will allow us to reframe and regroup. Yes, this can be challenging but real change and mastering complex transitions require effort, flexibility, courage and discipline. It is not for the faint hearted as we stretch and creak into new territories. We have a choice to either deal with change on our terms or allow change to deal with us.

---

Tribe is at the core of military life. Within it we locate who we are. We agree to identify and share values that extend well beyond the individual need. We move



from selfishness to selflessness. Core values- dependability, reliability and self-sacrifice - maintain connection and survivability. To so many Veterans, Civilian life is a random and unpredictable matrix that focuses more on the individual and the superficial than the collective. They understandably struggle to both understand how the territory operates as well as redefine who they are. The transition can be and is being successfully achieved and Tribe in a different way can be accomplished. But it requires coaching and mentoring and at times healing and counselling.

---

Every run, like every day I wake up to, offers me two choices- stay in my zone of comfort and remain static or everyday choose to step that little bit out of my comfort zone- push my heartbeat up, go through the wall of resistance and break through to becoming better at what I can do and be. I cannot achieve this every time and there are moments I feel like just sitting down and becoming a spectator to my life. But, no matter what, I have a choice. I choose to not embrace the victim. As long as I am willing to stretch into change and accept the discomfort, fear or resistance, I will progress forward step by step. Befriend discomfort, embrace resistance and trust you have the capacity to survive. Today, I ran a personal best. May today be your PB. Leave tomorrow alone. Focus on now.

---

The Warrior journey is thousands of years old. Inherent in it and critical to it at the core is the hunting of and killing of others and the willingness to do this - the Noble Savage. What is the meaning of violence in this territory? It is the skill and capacity to focus and direct lethal aggression. In the context of this territory, this is neither distorted or abnormal. Warriors have an intimate relationship with death and as a result an appreciation of life. However, in the context of civilian territory, values and judgements are placed on these skills, mindsets and individuals. Ignorance based on a vision that fails to see the importance of creating rituals to welcome our Warriors back results in a culture that judges, labels and distorts. Homelessness, suicide, disconnection and despair are to an extent a reflection of the battleground within the home territory that they return to. What currently exists to bridge the return is far from satisfactory. There is a dire need to step back and out of our models of management and see, truly see and welcome these individuals and value them for their strength and wisdom. No Warrior should ever return home to die!

---

What are you waiting for? The world and others in it are not waiting with bated breath for you to arrive. To move from where you currently are will take planning, training, learning, discipline, focus and work and even then, there are no iron clad guarantees. It will be based on your willingness to step into the void- the place between leaving and arriving- and stay coherent and focused no matter what. You will need to adjust and adapt as you move.

---

Hitting the wall? At various points in our life we are going to “hit the wall”. We may be called to move out our comfort zone or face adversity or challenge. We will either end up sitting on the side of the road or we will find resources to push through and redefine who we are. I remember running Comrades uphill 84km ultramarathon. At 60km I faced a painful injury. At that point the race truly began. I had run out of resources. In my mind I was already beginning to see myself giving up. At that point, what clearly came to me was that no matter how tough, challenging or painful my situation was, I could reframe and transform my experience from overwhelm to overcome. I could remove my attention from the pain and exhaustion. I could choose to cross the finishing line no matter what- run, walk or crawl. I only needed to focus on small sections, one at a time. Crossing the line was a greater victory than any other race I have run. I faced the Wall and ran through it. This experience has walked beside and inside of me for most of my life. No matter what wall, challenge or adversity you are currently experiencing, you are just a thought away from transforming overwhelm to overcoming. Go cross your finishing line.

---

If you want to achieve your outcome, be prepared to face it, make your presence felt, be assertive and communicate your needs clearly. Taking a passive role? Life will pass you by!!!!

---

Achievement takes endless patience, focus and determination. It takes hanging in there with absolute self-belief. At some unexpected point and often when you least expect it you will find yourself on the other side of the wall of your limiting self-beliefs. Keep breathing!

---

You may be or have already transitioned out the military. Do not leave yourself behind. Start with a vision, begin somewhere. Be guided by your core values. It takes time and perseverance to consolidate new territory, recreate new Teams and locate a place where the Warrior and Civilian can coexist.

---

There is no doubt that prior planning and preparation are a critical component of effective transitions and change. However, life is not simply going to give you a smooth tarred road, an even surface and no hills. You can only really find your core in your zone of discomfort. Think about how you behave in your family towards your partner or children when challenge and the potential for conflict arise. Think about what triggers you and how you behave in these moments. These define you and are evidence of your ability to walk your talk. It's in these moments that you face your internal dialogue. Do you pause in the face of doubt, do you collapse in the demands of adversity? Do you react when challenged. How you behave in the fire of these moments will define you. Go find your hills. Choose the road less travelled. Stretch into the sweat of your discomfort. Do this again and again till the hills and the heat become just a part of who you are.

---

In your zone of discomfort who you are becomes visible.

---

Are you in the driver's seat or the passenger seat of your car?

---

Excuses and avoidance are never an option. I'm tired, too busy and have no time are the servants of keeping you from moving forward. Feed your will, stretch your discipline, embrace discomfort and remember who you are.

---

Don't always train on the road. Life is going to throw you into uneven territory at times. You need to allow your body and mind to extend into the unpredictable and learn to flow and become comfortable with being out your safe zone. Risk is part of life. Befriend it and find confidence in your skill to move through it.

---

There will be times when you journey alone. You may need to travel long distances and draw on your core strength, resilience and internal resources. But at the end of a day, our journey becomes that much easier when we are located in Tribe. To be surrounded by accepting and caring others is an invaluable support. The combined strength of the Team/Tribe far outweighs that of the individual. Find your Tribe and make your voice heard.

---

The Wounded Warrior has the right to return stronger and wiser. But only if the healing journey is approached with the strong will, focus, determination and discipline that already exist within the Warrior. Your wars need not determine who you are. That is within your power. Step into, not away from your return.

---

In transitioning from the military, life is going to throw down a few challenges. Move through not away from these. You have a number of options but in the end, you need to make a choice, commit to action and move forward.

---

There is a room both in your brain (memories) and body where all the pain, loss, grief, despair and anger is stored. It may be 50 years old or recent, but it lurks in the shadows of your heart. It whispers to you in the early hours of the morning. It cannot be forgotten, silenced or locked away. It feels real in the present but see it just as energy stored in your body. It needs to talk to you. It needs to be listened to and it needs to come to the surface of your heart and heal. Yes, it can be a painful journey, but healing takes courage and commitment. Better to feel than to numb out or push down. This journey down into the roots of your memory cannot be done on your own. Asking for help is a sign of strength. Clear the roots that are tangled and struggling, and you will grow stronger. Your heart will open, and your body will heal. Healing is not an impossibility. It is a reality forged by choice and commitment.

---

The difficulty of the task is in direct proportion to the position you view it from. When facing challenging situations, we may often not have any control around changing the situation. It is as it is and faces us squarely head on. What we can impact on is our internal weather that we bring to this territory. However, this level of internal adaptability is not just restricted to our attitude. We can also shift

perspective and step back, up and out- even if this is at symbolic level. Gaining some distance from the emotion, fear and overwhelm will allow us to reframe and regroup. Yes, this can be challenging but real change and mastering complex transitions require effort, flexibility, courage and discipline. It is not for the faint hearted as we stretch and creak into new territories. We have a choice to either deal with change on our terms or allow change to deal with us on its terms.

---

## The End and To a New Beginning

**Copyright © 2019 Barry Zworestine.** *All rights reserved. No parts of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner without written permission from the author.*