



A Supported & Steadfast Veteran was born with a “we must leave the world better than we found it” mentality and thrived while serving as a leader in the military. The first few years out of service tend to be the most painful for this type of personality, as they re-orient their compass towards a new civilian mission and a world that is often more about the bottom line than about having a shared purpose. While not a joiner of legacy veteran organizations, this type of person often joins or starts veteran support groups at work and in the community; often serves as a leader and mentor for other veterans in ways they wish they had been supported.



ANXIETY LEVELS (I.E. OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT)



COMMON NEEDS & BEHAVIORS

- To serve and grow as a leader
 - To find kindered spirits and to serve proudly alongside them
 - To plan for the next step while also dutifully serving
- To anticipate and prepare for the inevitable identity crisis that comes when transitioning from military to civilian
 - To begin planning how to find meaning and purpose in civilian employment
 - To have my expectations set
- Non-cognitive skills, for me, start with learning how to operate outside of a strict and shared hierarchy, like the one I became accustomed to in the military
 - To connect with potential employers and begin to shape my civilian persona by telling the story (via resume or in person) a few different ways
 - To meet people outside of military culture to prime that I begin to truly shift to civilian world and develop cross-cultural competence
- Love and support through a complete identity crisis and breakdown
 - To remember that the first step is simply a starting point, and doesn’t have to be perfect
 - An outlet for my “military persona” and to create my “civilian persona”
 - To find kindred spirits who are ambitious about their careers and lives
 - A way to find private sector jobs that prioritize mission over profits
 - Find a mentor
- Someone I love and trust to tell me when I need to stop and take care of myself
 - To speak regularly about my time in the service with a few close military contacts
 - A reminder to take care of pressing health concerns before I crash and burn
 - To completely unplug every once in awhile so that I can recharge my own personal batteries and return to the mission full-heartedly
- To serve as a loving partner, parent, employee sibling, mentor and family member
 - To continue to find fresh and meaningful challenges that stimulate my creatively and intellectually
 - To retire purposefully, anticipating and hoping to avoid yet another identity crisis

PLAYBOOK FOR REACHING OUT

TONE/LANGUAGE

- Always explain the purpose and reason behind something; why it matters
- Use respectful language that offers me choices and frames opportunities in terms of convenience
- Reinforce how seriously we’re taking our mission as VA, as mutual respect goes a long way

COMMON SOURCES OF SUPPORT

- A similarly motivated social and family network
- My partner and family
- 1-2 close Military buddies
- Civic and public service organizations
- Close/kindred-spirits and friendship
- Mentors, professors and bosses I’ve found along the way
- Speaking about my experiences in public

RISK FACTORS

- Loss of or inability to find a mission that is purposeful, makes the world a better place, and that I can work towards
- Working a soulless, corporate job
- Standing still for too long or the inability to feel as if I’m making progress
- Loss of financial independence
- Not being able to find kindred spirits

DO I IDENTIFY AS A VETERAN?

What kind of veteran? Being a veteran is a big part of who I am, but when I hear the word, I picture a Vietnam Veteran sitting at a VFW, which I don’t identify with or even feel invited to sit next to at one of those bars.

Jarrodd Jarrod | Salt Lake City, UT

WHAT’S MY VIEW OF VA?

“I would say to expect the identity crisis. Knowing that you’re going to feel it will make it easier to cope. There are very few places in our society where you will feel the duty-honor-country part. Be prepared that it’s far more likely to be about making money than about serving”

Noel | Los Angeles, CA

I’ve found a way to thrive on my own. Who are you again, VA? I tried once and it wasn’t convenient (or someone was rude), so I’ve literally never thought about it again. It’s for someone else; not for me.

Sierra | Oakland, CA

“My support is and always was: duty first”

“I would say to expect the identity crisis. Knowing that you’re going to feel it will make it easier to cope. There are very few places in our society where you will feel the duty-honor-country part. Be prepared that it’s far more likely to be about making money than about serving”

You went in with a bunch of people on your left and right — and you’re getting out. Get a new [family], and get it fast.