

The Lifer

Driving Desire: I am trying to let go of the military even though it means everything to me.



TRANSITION CONSIDERATION

Consideration Level

Planning

Planning was not a high priority as my focus was mainly on working or handling appointments until my last day in the military.

Low Med High

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Support

I may not have much support or desire it. My focus will be on doing my job or going to medical appointments, which may lead me to grasp for support structures once I separate from the military.

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Access to Resources

I may see transition as a "check the box" task while I'm still in the military. I know there are resources available, but I may struggle to find what I need at the last minute.

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TRANSITION PRIORITIES

Priority Level

Housing

I may have a general idea where I will live next. It may be that I will move to be closer to family, or will choose to stay close to our last duty station.

Low Med High

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Family

I had to put family second for a long time. Now that I have the availability, I will want to put a higher focus on spending time with them.

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Education

I may be less interested in education as I enjoyed my military skillset and will try to continue using my skillset if I can. I may have passed any GI Bill resources on to my family.

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Employment

I will try to find a job outside of the military, but my focus is on family and reacting to what's changed.

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Finances

I may have high hopes of replacing and maintaining my current financial lifestyle. I may find difficulty in replacing the resources provided by the military. I will rely on my pension or disability for support.

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Health

I may have health issues from a long military career or from a specific disability from the military, so I will need to spend time ensuring my health is taken care of appropriately.

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Pre-military life: The military was always my goal. I may have family who served as well, and I joined as soon as I had the opportunity.

Military life: I will be proud of my service and will have loved my time in the military. I may be forced to leave due to retirement, or any number of reasons influencing an early separation, when I'm not ready to move on.

Transition story: I will know several colleagues who have gone through transition, or I may be placed in a unit to help me transition if I am going through a medical discharge. Even if I am armed with knowledge, I still may try and work until the last minute instead of focusing on my needs as much as I should.

Life after transition: The key to my success will be having others who are able to push me to take care of my own needs. I may find it challenging to set myself up for success as my primary focus was not on my transition needs.

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I haven't wrapped my head around being a retired Veteran. I don't want to walk in and say 'I'm [my rank] retired.'

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...I was doing my job [in the military] for about two to three days before my terminal leave. I headed back CONUS, that was a big floodgate. And then, first day of classes was like, 'okay, now we're a civilian.'

What I want during my transition:

- I need a network that can help push me in the right direction at the right time as my focus is on accomplishing what the military needs me to do and not on my transition.
- I need realistic expectations to be set about what my lifestyle will look like once I leave the military and how I can best set myself up to be successful.
- I need someone else to put aside time for me to focus on my transition.
- I expect the services outside of DoD to have the same reliability and structure. I will become frustrated or confused if I discover that to not be the case.

VA



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The Goal Oriented

Driving Desire: I view the military as a way to reach my future goals.



TRANSITION CONSIDERATION

Consideration Level

Planning

I had a general plan for what I want to accomplish since before enlisting, but it is becoming more focused on specific goals the closer I am to separation.

Low Med High
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Support

I may rely on my family and other Veterans for support to help me when I transition, or help me quickly get back on my feet once I transitioned.

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Access to Resources

I know the resources I need, but sometimes I do not receive helpful information.

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TRANSITION PRIORITIES

Priority Level

Housing

Housing may be a lower priority because I feel this is likely to be supported by my family, friends, my own personal planning, or the GI Bill.

Low Med High
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Family

If I have a family, this may be a lower priority as my main focus is to ensure our family finances are established or next steps are securely in place.

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Education

I may have joined to gain access to the GI Bill, so most of my energy may go into taking the necessary steps to attend college.

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Employment

I may have joined to gain access to a job skill or career. This learned skill or career path may not translate well into a civilian career field or may not be readily available when I transition and am trying to land a job after my military service.

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Finances

Financial security is the cornerstone to achieving my goal. I may find that I won't make as much money as I planned. If I choose education the GI Bill helps, but I still may have to find a job to ensure I can pay all of my bills.

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Health

I may not focus much on my health at the moment because I feel fine and other things are more important.

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Pre-military life: I had a specific goal I wanted to achieve when I joined the military.

Military life: I will focus on completing my initial military contract, but I may decide to stay in longer or potentially retire from the military if I enjoy the work and lifestyle.

Transition story: My singular goal will be to maintain my post-military plan that I settled on before joining or that I figured out during my time in the military. My transition experience and attention will be focused on fulfilling my education or career plans.

Life after transition: The key to my success will be landing my chosen career or effectively using the GI Bill.

I may find it challenging to set up a support group or have a social life because that is provided in the military and my friends from before the military may have become unreliable.

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I am in a good place. When I joined the military, I had educational goals. I met those goals. It made it easier to find employment, I think. I got a job in what I have my master's degree in. So, now I am getting more hands on experience.

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I knew I wanted to go into aviation because my neighbor worked with the Blackhawks. When I was 12, he let me go into the simulator and then I passed the certification. I did junior guard in middle school and JRTC in high school.

What I want during my transition:

- I need my resources to provide me with specific information and enough time to put actionable steps into my plan.
- If I choose to pursue education, I need my school to understand my experience.
- If I choose to pursue a job skill, I need time and understanding to acquire a position in the location I choose to live after separation.
- If I choose to pursue a job skill, I need to better understand how to market myself.
- If I choose to pursue a career, I need to be provided a realistic picture of my job search, timing, and value I may bring to the civilian job market.

The Purpose Seeker

Driving Desire: I am trying to find a purpose for my life after the military.



TRANSITION CONSIDERATION

Consideration Level

Planning

I may create several tentative plans, but it can be difficult to know which one is right, so I will pursue multiple options if I'm able.

Low Med High



Support

I will ask anyone and everyone for advice to learn about their experience and see if a job opportunity or resource might help me as well.



Access to Resources

I will seek-out as much information and guidance as is possible to try and piece together the next steps in my life.



TRANSITION PRIORITIES

Priority Level

Housing

I may have housing in place and experience with the VA Home Loan; but I may also be willing to move wherever an opportunity takes me if I think it's for the right reasons.

Low Med High



Family

My family will be my priority and the bridge to my new sense of purpose and community.



Education

I may pursue education if I believe it will help me with the next step I want to take for myself.



Employment

I will review multiple jobs and new roles before settling into one. I may change my mind to re-enlist or serve in another capacity in the National Guard or Reserves to maintain a similar sense of purpose I had in the military.



Finances

I will plan and have several concepts for how my financial situation may look once I decide which path to pursue.



Health

My health will take a backseat to my pursuit of purpose and next steps.



Pre-military life: I've always been attracted to the military and may have had other family who served as well. I may have worked a job or two as a teenager prior to entering the military.

Military life: I will have a good military career. Somewhere along the way, I will choose to separate due to developing new career interests, wanting to spend more time with my family, or planning for retirement.

Transition story: I will focus a lot of my time on finding something that will give me a similar sense of purpose to the military, which requires me to learn about as many resources as possible so I can weigh my options.

Life after transition: The key to my success will be building a new community by focusing on my family or volunteering to help other Veterans.

I may find it challenging to integrate in the civilian space if my new job and coworkers don't live up to my values or provide me with a new sense of purpose.

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I was going to wait until August to get out and go to school. And then I applied at [company], and I didn't like it there. It felt like I was the only one working. So I decided to do full time schooling. So I have been going to school full-time.

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I really didn't have a plan with my separation or retirement. I just knew I had an education. I knew I wanted to work, but I didn't know what type. I wanted my daughter to still see me have a purpose, basically.

What I want during my transition:

- Initially, I will need to hear the experiences and advice of others who have transitioned so I can consider my options.
- I may need to be connected with other Veterans who were a similar rank or skillsets so I feel confident in the options I have.
- I will need the time and space to organize my various plans.
- I would prefer to receive training more often so I can ensure I didn't miss anything.

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The True Separator

Driving Desire: I just want to get out the military.



TRANSITION CONSIDERATION

Consideration Level

Planning

I may have a general idea of what life outside the military looks like for me, but I'm mostly just focused on getting out and moving on.

Low Med High
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Support

I may lean heavily on family or friends for housing or other needed support for a starting point following separation.

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Access to Resources

I will avoid military or VA resources because I'm trying to leave the culture behind me. Engaging these resources may just be a check-the-box task for me while I'm still in the military.

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TRANSITION PRIORITIES

Priority Level

Housing

I will have an idea of where I can go that may include staying with family, friends, or my own apartment if I can afford it in my home state.

Low Med High
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Family

If I have a family, they may be one of the key reasons for why I want to separate.

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Education

Education may be an option for me as it allows me to explore new opportunities and provides quick financial support from the GI Bill.

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Employment

Employment for the sake of financial support may be crucial for me as I try to establish my next steps. I may rapidly test my fit for many jobs and rely on my family's network to find initial employment opportunities outside of the military.

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Finances

Reestablishing my finances may take some time, so I may rely on family support to make ends meet.

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Health

Health is a low priority as I attempt to piece together the more immediate needs that will allow me to begin planning and taking action on my next steps.

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Pre-military life: I may have joined before I was sure what to do with my life, or when college didn't feel right for me.

Military life: Military culture may not be a good fit for me. I may have had bad experiences with my command, my job, or the environment that heavily influenced my decision to separate.

Transition story: When I tell my peers I'm separating, I may be treated with less respect than I deserve; which will amplify my decision to leave. I will be tired of the military and want to do something different, but I may also have some trouble figuring out what that is because I'm so focused on getting out.

Life after transition: The key to my success will be setting up structures for housing and financial support while I get back on my feet.

I may struggle with what to do, who to reach out to, and which VA resources will be best to utilize because I want to disengage from anything dealing with the military for a while.

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Well, I mean, I was at the end of my rope. I couldn't go any further.”

“
When my husband was deployed and I was a first time mom I didn't hear anything from my leadership about maternity leave or checks-ins. So that was another indicator that, 'hey, I need to go.'”

What I want during my transition:

- I may feel I'm treated with less respect once I inform my command and other Service members that I'm planning to separate. A lack of support can add stress, anxiety, unnecessary time constraints, and hardship on my ability to transition effectively.
- I will need VA and other military-related resources to understand that I may be apprehensive to engage while I'm separating, but still may have a need for what they are able to offer me.
- I may have a few ideas, but not a clear plan in mind for my future. I will need patience and support from those around me while I explore my next steps.

VA



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