

Defining Your Mission

No matter how many years you've been in the military, you have known your mission. You have followed a code that defines your essence. These were built upon the military culture that was with you 24 hours, 365 days each year of service. Congratulations on your successes. You have earned many things including our gratitude for your service.

Now you are approaching a crossroads. Some are further out while others are at the brink. Hopefully, you haven't stepped out into that brink without preparing for the new world that some of you haven't seen or experienced since high school or college. The military services, government agencies and all of the nonprofit as well as for profits have collaborated to provide you with an overwhelming abundance of resources to help you prepare for the next chapter in your professional careers and personal lives.

The most significant question is how ready you are for this lifechanging transition. This question has as many facets as a cut diamond. I stepped into the civilian world after my time in the Air Force when the economy was tanked. However, I leveraged my experiences as a services officer, what y'all call today force support, into a job in food services. My career then developed from there. I had the opportunity and the skills to fit into a career that would always be in demand. Everyone needs to eat, right? How times have changed!

We are in an economic crisis that is unprecedented. Industries that have always been able to weather the dynamics of economic ups and downs are in turmoil. Prognosticators are sending mixed messages about the economic turnaround. You will hear a lot about what will happen and find that the realities are still unknown. Only time will tell.

One thing for sure is that there will be record unemployment. If you are leaving military service in the next months as the businesses begin to reopen, you could be competing with many for possibly few jobs. The workplaces are also changing. Many businesses and employees have found that they can telecommute rather than work in the office. Workplaces are also redesigning the workplaces to accommodate the social distancing. Meetings are virtual rather than in person. Travel will be impacted. These are just a few things that are transforming as the economy re-energizes.

One of the initial questions on your "readiness" checklist should be your financial situation. You should plan on reserves to cover a longer than anticipated gap between DOS and the new job. Make sure that you have prepared your "toolbox" with the planning, skills, and education

that you will need to market yourself in this competitive new world. Use the many resources to assist you in your transition.

If you can't answer the question on readiness, then think about postponing your separation or retirement. There is an interesting article in the May 20, 2020 edition of the San Antonio Express-News entitled "*GIs now opting to stay in the military*". This is a topic that has been discussed at the **JBSA Alliance** meetings as well as in **Centurion Military Alliance** transition sessions.

Our goal is to make y'all succeed in your transition. Part of the discussion that we have with you is your readiness. The decisions are up to you. Use the many resources available to you to make the right decision for you. Best wishes.

Kitty