Empowering Veterans to Thrive Post-Service

Addressing Addiction, Substance Use Disorder, & Suicide by Embracing Growth and Purpose

I encourage you to share these exercises below with the Veterans you support. My recent TEDx Talk is a short version of today's presentation. If you would like to watch or share it, visit www.UnspokenTrauma.vet. If you share this material, I'd love to hear about your experiences and any exciting outcomes you observe. If I can do anything else to help you better serve your military-connected students, let me know. – Garret

1. Giving Credit Where Credit is Due (CONNECTION)

Make a list of 20 or more accomplishments, wins, or successes in your life.

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2. Affirming Your Innate Strengths (CONNECTION & AUTHENTICITY)

Creativity – Curiosity – Judgment – Love of Learning – Perspective – Bravery
Honesty – Perseverance – Zest – Kindness – Love – Social Intelligence
Fairness – Leadership – Teamwork – Forgiveness – Humility – Hope - Humor
Prudence – Self-regulation – Appreciation of Beauty – Gratitude - Spirituality

One innate-strength that I identify with is _____.

One time I used my _____ was when: _____

_____ .

Another innate-strength that I identify with is _____.

One time I used my _____ was when: _____

_____ .

A third innate-strength that I identify with is _____.

One time I used my _____ was when: _____

_____ .

3. Removing My Masks (AUTHENTICITY)

How do I hide?

(Consider - *Health, Wealth, Wants/Desires, Feelings, Knowledge, Relationships*)

What do I fear?

(Ex.- *Lost relationships, opportunities, job/financial security, respect, acceptance*)

What does it cost me?

(Ex.– *Peace of mind, self-esteem, focus, joy, happiness, deeper connections*)

On a separate sheet of paper, answer these questions for yourself. Be open and honest with yourself and let go of any need to judge or justify anything you write. The purpose of this exercise is to bring awareness to some of your feelings and actions. **From awareness comes the opportunity for growth.**

4. Writing a Heroic Story – Opening the door for PTG (MEANING)

1. Identify a particularly challenging experience or time in your life that you still struggle with.
2. Using the back of this page or a journal, write a fairytale or fictional story about what happened. Write in 3rd person and describe the character playing you as the hero or heroine.
3. Continue the story into the future and bring the story to a positive conclusion.
4. Reflect on the strengths, opportunities, and growth your story character experienced *<u>because</u>* of the experience they faced.

5. Joy List – 12 Things I love to Do (MEANING)

	♥	$	P/S	5yrs	P/A	🕓
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						
11.						
12.						

I Learned that: _____

_____

I will: _____

_____

♥	It's important that significant other shares passion	🕓	Something done in last 6 months
P/S	It is better when **P**lanned or **S**pontaneous?	**5 Yrs**	Something started doing in last 5 yrs
P/A	Prefer to do with other **P**eople or **A**lone	**$**	Cost more than $10 to do

6. Finding Your Life's Purpose (MEANING – OPTIONAL)

1. **My Strengths/Traits:** List two unique personal qualities that you most enjoy expressing in the world? These may be strengths you previously identified or character traits like *compassionate* and *articulate.*

_____ _____

2. **My Interests:** List one or two ways you enjoy expressing those qualities when working or interacting with others, such as *supporting* and *inspiring.* (Other examples – writing, speaking, coaching, mentoring, dancing, painting, leading, healing, inventing, creating, etc.

_____ _____

3. **My Ideal, The Perfect World:** Write a few sentences about what the perfect world would look like to you. Assume the world is perfect right now. What does the world look like? How is everyone interacting? What does it feel like? (Write these statements in present tense describing the perfect world as you see and feel it)

Example (my own): *In an ideal world, every Veteran who has struggled with addiction or mental health is living in recovery, free from the chains of their past and realizing their true potential for happiness, success, love, and joy. Every Veteran is personally and professionally fulfilled by engaging in work that uses their own unique strengths to positively serve and contribute to the world in their own unique way.*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. **Put it All Together:** Combine your strengths, interests, and vision of an ideal world into one statement.

Example (my own): *"My purpose is to use my humor and creativity to empower Veterans to break free from the chains of their addictive pasts and live into their true potential for happiness, fulfillment and joy."*

My Purpose is to …. (Now it's your turn. Draft your first purpose statement. Revisit and refine it over the coming weeks until it truly resonates with you.)

BONUS: The 15 Min/Day Warrior Recovery Reset (WELLBEING)

Sample Daily Worksheet from The Warrior Reset

>> Mark off the following as you complete them today:

☐ Cold Shower (Length:_____) ☐ Mirror Exercise ☐ Breath Exercise

>> Empowered Journaling:

Part 1: Something good that happened or that I experienced in the last 24 hours and how I contributed to making it happen:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Part 2: A challenge I currently face or a goal I am working toward and one small action I can do to move forward:

- _____
- _____
- _____

>> What is something you noticed about yourself or your daily actions today?

_____

_____

_____

_____

SCAN TO ACCESS the complete 10-day Warrior Reset to access the audio lessons, meditation, and full workbook. Or visit: **www.TheWarriorReset.com**