PROFESSIONAL OPTIONS POST-MILITARY SERVICE

SPEECH FOR

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Hello everyone. General George Patton said, “ I don’t fear failure. I only fear the slowing up of the engine inside of me which is saying, ‘Keep going, someone must be on top, why not you?’” For those of you who are about to retire from military service, Congratulations!! You have spent the most recent years of your lives and careers in what might seem to be an isolated or separate existence, albeit one that is very special and honorable, and I am sure many of you are wondering, “What do I do now??” Well, it’s fortunate for all of us that we’re all gathered here today, and I would like to acknowledge all of you for your dedication and commitment to service. I’d like to shed some light on the good news-your military training and experience has given you a unique perspective and advantage in determining your professional or educational course once you re-enter the civilian sector. (**Acknowledge the person or people that invited you to speak**) I would like to thank \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for giving me the opportunity to share some thoughts with you on the subject. Consider this a little fuel to jump-start your inner engines, as General Patton called it.

You’ve done your time in the military; you’ve served your country, and you’re ready to explore your options for the next stages of your life adventure. Now what? No matter your age, your tenure, your prior training or your future focus, your military experience has provided you with more skills and abilities than you might have imagined. Think of the core competencies you learned and trained for rigorously: Discipline. Teamwork. Reconnaissance. Resilience. Survival. Learning to pay attention to the smallest detail. Committing to a regimen. Learning how to follow a leader. Learning how to lead. Every one of these traits is essential in securing and sustaining employment in the civilian sector or accomplishing success in higher education. When fueling that engine in your mind, don’t ever lose sight of the positive qualities you already possess and have earned through your years of service. Don’t think about what you might have missed; instead focus on the knowledge and experience you’ve gained and begin to create the context in which the skills you’ve been taught will serve you.

Many articles have been written on this topic and each bit of information leads to new revelations. In an article that appeared on the website Bloomberg Businessweek, originally posted on the Harvard Business Review and titled, “Military Skills Lead to Organizational Success,” we learn in the opening that, “World class, combat honed, and expansive skill sets in strategic planning, wargaming, competitive intelligence, leader development, rigorous standard enforcement, and innovation in execution are only a few cutting edge managerial skill sets that the military brings.” I want to point out that these qualities are not only for the management level. These characteristics are essential in every phase of business. (**If you think it’s appropriate and you want to keep the room enthusiastic, you can say)** We think war is hell? Welcome to corporate America!! (**Wait for the laugh**). I really do believe that anyone who is about to continue his or her education or enter the work force-in any capacity, is better equipped to deal with the working world as long as he or she has the military training to compete, sustain, and succeed.

In addition, as you prepare for your ultimate completion of military service, be sure to take advantage of the courses, programs, and benefits that are extended to those who retire from the military. If you aren’t given guidance to point you in the right direction, ask questions and find the resources you need to attain a sense of completion and a road map to re-entering civilian life. There are transition assistance programs. Take advantage of what is offered to you and what you find. In combat, you are responsible for yourself and your team, but remember that combat has many different definitions. Be prepared for the competition you are about to face. Remember, that no matter how tough your military service might have been, you learned a new language-that of the skills of the military, and you have the fortitude and strength to conquer the competition in today’s work world.

I want to congratulate each one of you and encourage you to remember the words of General Patton. Make sure to keep your inner engines fueled, and keep going. Someone has to be ion top. It may as well be YOU. And YOU. And **YOU**!!

Thank you all very much!