

# Why Taking Risks Matters After the Military

One of the biggest misconceptions about life after the military is that playing it safe will work.

It doesn't.

In a recent conversation on *The Enduring Mindset Podcast*, I sat down with former battalion commander Tara Kaiser to talk about transition, risk, and what it actually takes to move forward after service

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## Transition Does Not Come With a Plan

When Tara left the military, she did not have everything figured out.

No clear blueprint.

No guaranteed path.

Just the understanding that the next phase of life would require something different.

Even after a successful career, she had to ask a simple but difficult question:

What do I actually want now?

That is where a lot of people get stuck.

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## The Identity Shift Is Real

In the military, identity is clear:

- Rank
- Role
- Mission

Once that uniform comes off, all of that disappears.

Tara realized something quickly.

The authority and structure that once defined her did not carry over automatically into the civilian world.

Respect had to be earned again.

From the ground up.

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## Playing It Safe Has a Cost

There is a version of transition that looks responsible.

Stable job.

Predictable income.

Clear path forward.

But that path does not always lead to fulfillment.

At one point, Tara had that option.

She chose something different.

She chose control of her time.

She chose ownership.

he chose uncertainty.

That decision led her into entrepreneurship.

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## **Risk Is Part of the Process**

There is no version of growth without risk.

Not in the military.

Not in life after it.

Tara said it simply:

You can never win if you are afraid of losing.

That does not mean reckless decisions.

It means understanding that progress requires stepping into the unknown.

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## **Starting Over Requires Humility**

One of the hardest realities of transition is this:

You may have to start over.

Even after leading at high levels.

Even after years of experience.

The business world required a different skill set.

So she did the work.

She went back to school.

She learned something new.

She built new capabilities.

No ego. Just growth.

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## **Relationships Still Matter Most**

Some things do carry over from the military.

People matter.

In leadership and in business, success still comes down to:

- Trust

- Relationships
- Consistency

Tara emphasized that relationships need to be treated as priorities, not afterthoughts.

Once trust is broken, it is difficult to rebuild.

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## What This Means for You

If you are navigating transition or trying to figure out your next move:

### 1. Accept uncertainty

You are not supposed to have everything figured out.

### 2. Understand that risk is part of growth

There is no safe path to something meaningful.

### 3. Be willing to start over

Your past experience matters, but it does not guarantee your future.

### 4. Drop the ego

Growth requires learning again.

### 5. Invest in relationships

They will matter more than any resume.

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## Final Thought

Most people wait for certainty before they act.

That certainty never comes.

The people who move forward are the ones who accept the risk and act anyway.

Not because they have all the answers.

But because they are willing to figure it out along the way.

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**Listen to the full episode:**

👉 <https://open.spotify.com/show/7fQ5oHlOZe94Jcjj6ytL2h?si=0c4c82fc29c6465f>

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If you're a veteran or leader trying to figure out your next move, I share conversations and insights like this every week through **The Enduring Mindset Podcast**.

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