

Why Good Follows Grief

(And What It Teaches About Leadership and Life)

Most people want to avoid grief.

Avoid struggle.

Avoid setbacks.

Avoid the moments that knock you off your plan.

But what if those moments are actually part of the process?

In a previous episode of The Enduring Mindset Podcast, I sat down with Dean Huard, a retired Army leader who transitioned into public service and faced a series of challenges that tested everything he thought he had figured out.

What he shared was simple, but powerful:

👉 Good follows grief

Leadership Is Not Just About the Position

Dean spent decades leading in the military.

Strategic roles.

Operational experience.

High-level responsibility.

But one of the biggest lessons came after the uniform came off.

Leadership is not about:

Rank

Title

Position

It is about:

How you show up

How you serve

How you handle things when they do not go as planned

The Plan Will Change

A lot of people think if they prepare enough, they can control the outcome.

Dean had a plan for transition.

It did not go the way he expected.

Job loss.
Health issues.
Uncertainty.

That is when the real work starts.

Because at some point:

👉 The plan always meets reality

Burnout, Transition, and Identity

Even with experience and preparation, transition is not easy.

You can:

Have the resume
Have the background
Have the leadership experience

And still feel off.

Still feel uncertain.

Still feel like you are figuring it out in real time.

That is more common than people think.

You Still Have to Sell Yourself

One of the most practical takeaways:

Everyone sells.

Even if you never worked in sales.

In the military, you:

Sell ideas
Sell plans
Sell decisions

After transition, that does not change.

You just have to learn how to:

Translate it
Communicate it
Apply it in a different environment

The Shift from Strategic to Tactical

This is something most senior leaders are not prepared for.

You go from:

High-level decision making

Back to:
Executing
Building
Doing

Dean described going from strategic roles overseas to handling very tactical responsibilities in local government.

That shift is real.

And it can challenge your identity if you are not ready for it.

Build Yourself First

One of the frameworks he shared was simple:

B.U.S.

- Build yourself
- Unite your tribe
- Serve others

It starts with you.

Not your job.
Not your title.

You.

Understanding:
What matters to you
What your values are
What you actually want

You Cannot Do It Alone

When things get difficult, isolation makes it worse.

Dean leaned on:
Other veterans
Mentors
People who had been through it

That support system matters.

Not just for opportunity.

For perspective.

Service Does Not Stop

Even without a job, he found ways to serve.

Writing.
Speaking.
Mentoring.

He called it “micro work.”

Small actions that:
Create purpose
Build momentum
Keep you moving forward

The Hardest Moments Change You

In a short period of time, he experienced:

A stroke
A second medical event
A major infection
Unemployment

Most people would shut down.

Instead, he stepped back and looked for the pattern.

And what he found was this:

👉 Every difficult moment was followed by something good

What This Means for You

If you are in a tough season right now:

1. Do not assume it is the end

It might be part of the process.

2. Take time to reflect

Do not just react. Think.

3. Build your foundation

Know who you are without the title.

4. Stay connected

You are not meant to do this alone.

5. Keep serving

Even in small ways.

Final Thought

Most people try to avoid grief.

But sometimes:

👉 That is where the growth happens

And if you are willing to stay in it long enough:

👉 Good follows grief

Listen to the full episode:

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

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.

Related conversations:

- *What Happens When Life Forces You to Slow Down*
- *Why Veterans Struggle After Transition (And What No One Talks About)*
- *What Great Leaders Actually Do: Lessons from a Command Sergeant Major*