

# Veteran Transition Map and Action Plan

## A Personal Navigation Resource For Self-Care, Resilience and Well-Being

Designed to Assist  
Active Duty Military Preparing for Separation from Service  
Veterans of all Eras and Civilian Contractors



HARVESTING WISDOM

PUBLISHING

Transition Map and Action Plan Co-Created by, and Dedicated to  
Danny Facto (1979 - 2009) Purple Heart Recipient, Army OEF Combat Veteran

Author's Note: The Transition Map and Action Plan is available as a Free download to Veterans and family members to ease their transition from military service. This document shall not be commercialized, distributed, taught or trained by coaches, consultants, companies or non-profit organizations without the expressed permission from the author.



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Danny Facto  
1979 - 2009  
Purple Heart Recipient  
OEF Combat Veteran  
Army, 10th Mountain Division



## The Veteran Transition Map and Action Plan is dedicated to Danny Facto

Danny and his family's transition from military service provided many lessons and concepts found in this ever-evolving resource document. During the weeks and months following his return from Afghanistan in January of 2004, he would put his family to bed, secure all the doors and windows, and guard his home from a ditch on the corner of his property. On many nights he would call his father and talk for hours about the struggles he was having adapting to home life and symptoms he was experiencing from Post Traumatic Stress. After serving nine years with the Army 10th Mountain Division and two tours in Afghanistan, Danny made the decision to leave the military. Like many separating Veterans, he was very uncertain about what he would do next and how he would provide for his family. Eventually, he came to realize that what was missing in his life was a new sense of identity and mission that would create the meaning and purpose he found while serving. Ultimately, he decided to use his educational benefits to begin attending a small community college in Syracuse to receive his Associates Degree. He was eventually accepted into Syracuse University to study for his Masters in Clinical Social Work. His vision was to work as a counselor with transitioning Veterans and their families.

Although he was studying to be a mental health professional, expanding his understanding of the complex emotional and psychological effects of Combat, Post Traumatic Stress (PTS), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), grief, loss and survivor guilt, he was also a Combat Veteran himself, suffering from each of these very same challenges. Unfortunately, his vision was cut short when he was killed in a late night, high speed motorcycle accident on July 15th 2009.

The tools and resources you are about to discover are dedicated to Danny and his long-term vision of helping the military and the Veterans Administration integrate these tools into the current transition assistance programs for all separating military to insure more successful transitions for Veterans and their families.



You are about to journey into both familiar and uncharted territory.

You have found this map and action plan at this exact moment for a reason.

## Six steps to help you get the most from this resource

### 1 Suspend for now, perfectionism, be a learner:

*"In times of change, learners inherit the Earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists." – Eric Hoffer*

You are looking for keys and clues to help you unlock your potential. Why not ask your judgmental-self/critical mind if it would be OK to look for what could be useful to you as you review this document and to suspend for now, doubt, negativity, skepticism and perfectionism.

### 2 Minimize distractions:

Commit to investing at least 15 minutes to review this entire document. Turn off your phone, your TV and stop checking your email. Repeat this review process until you are pulling the best and most relevant parts of this plan. Disregard anything that does not feel relevant to you at this time.

### 3 Know where you are and where you are heading:

Circle your present location on the pyramid of needs and in the six areas of your life on pages 6 and 7 on the Transition Map. Circle where you want to be and draw an arrow to it. Create a binder for each time you complete this map and action plan exercise and start writing in a journal today to keep track of your thoughts and progress.

### 4 Start off solo but find an accountability partner when you are ready:

Pick someone you trust that has your back and challenge each other to take charge of your present lives and circumstances.

### 5 When you are grounded and ready, commit to staying in communication:

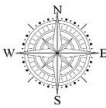
Commit to staying in communication through this process no matter how much you may feel like withdrawing or isolating. Believe it or not, feeling the need to withdraw is a sign that you are on the verge of a breakthrough to a new way of thinking and new possibilities. Push through this urge to withdrawal by communicating what you are experiencing to your accountability partner or counselor. Give permission to your accountability partner to find you or to alert others you trust if you fall out of contact. This is part of your safety plan to insure your success.

### 6 Know that your life matters:

Regardless of what you have been through up until now, there is a purpose and a reason why you are here and it is up to you to discover it. If and when you are ready, be willing to seek out accountability partners, peer advisors or even mental health counselors to find the answers you need to live a better life.

NOTE: This Map and Action Plan is not a replacement for guidance and counseling from a trained mental health professional. During your journey, seek out peers, mentors, counselors and resources to aid in your transition.

IF YOU FIND YOURSELF IN CRISIS  
BE WILLING TO CALL THE VETERANS CRISIS LINE AT 800-273-8255, PRESS 1



## If you don't have a goal, make your first goal, finding a goal.

The point of the Veteran Transition Map is to help you discover where you are in six key areas of your life at this time: Physical, Emotional, Spritual, Family Education and Employment. Even if your current circumstances are undesirable, getting clear on where you are and where you want to go is essential. Identifying the resources and support you need to move forward with your life can offer some relief and a sense of progress.

- Our initial goal is to find out how things are now in your life and how you would like them to be. In each area of the Veteran Transtion Map found at the end of this document, circle the starting point of where you are at this time. From this circle, draw an arrow to point to where you want to be and circle that area as well.
- What have your tried already to bring about changes in your life? What has worked? What hasn't worked? What outcomes have your experienced? What difficulties, if any did you have and how did you handle these obstacles?
- How would you know that you were making progress? What would change? What would other people notice?
- Lastly: Can you foresee or envision any particular obstacles or barriers that could get in the way of your progress and what could you do to anticipate and address them shoud they arise?

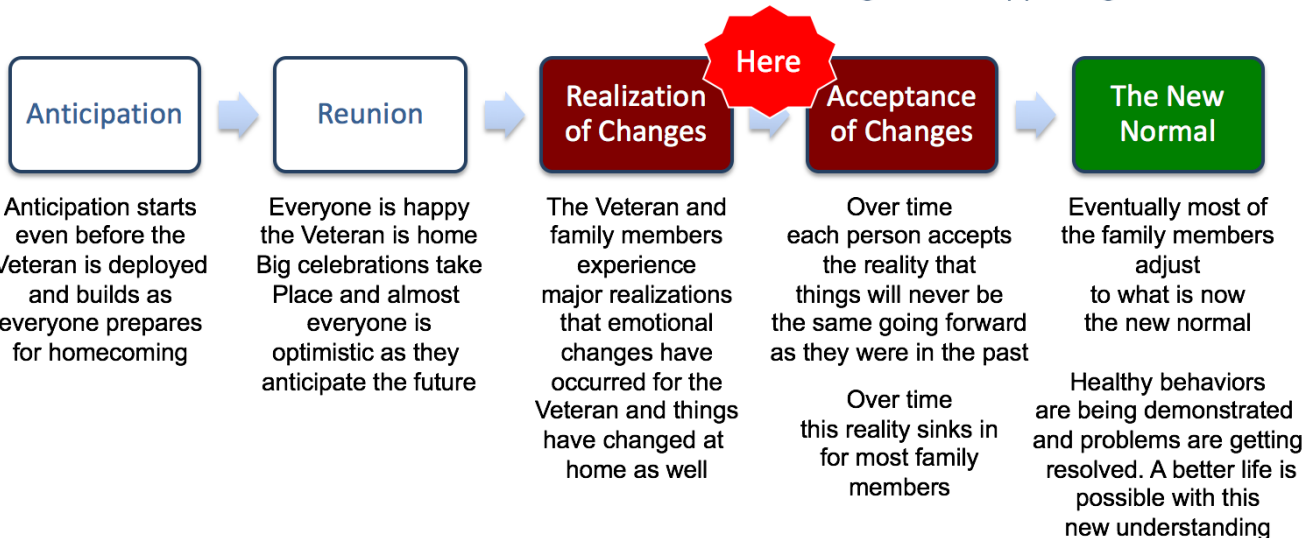
Making progress: Each month, or at an agreed upon time, reassess where you are on the Transition Map to provide evidence of your progress. Even the smallest improvement in one area will provide significant growth opportunities in other areas. Regardless of your current circumstances, never underestimate your ability to choose a positive thought over a negative thought and to move toward what you want and away from what you fear.

Source of questions, with permission: Roadmap to Resilience, author: Donald Meichenbaum, Ph.D.

## The Five Phases of Homecoming and Transition from Military Service Getting To Your New Normal



The Greatest Transition Challenges Are Happening

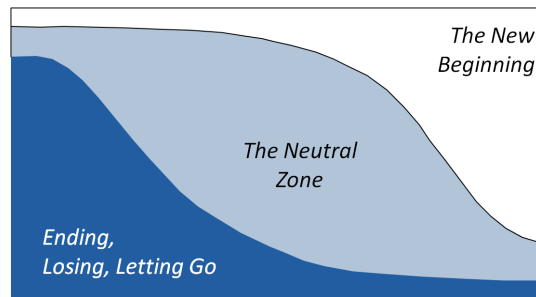




*Transition is a predictable process that can be anticipated, prepared for and eased if we remain open to learning*

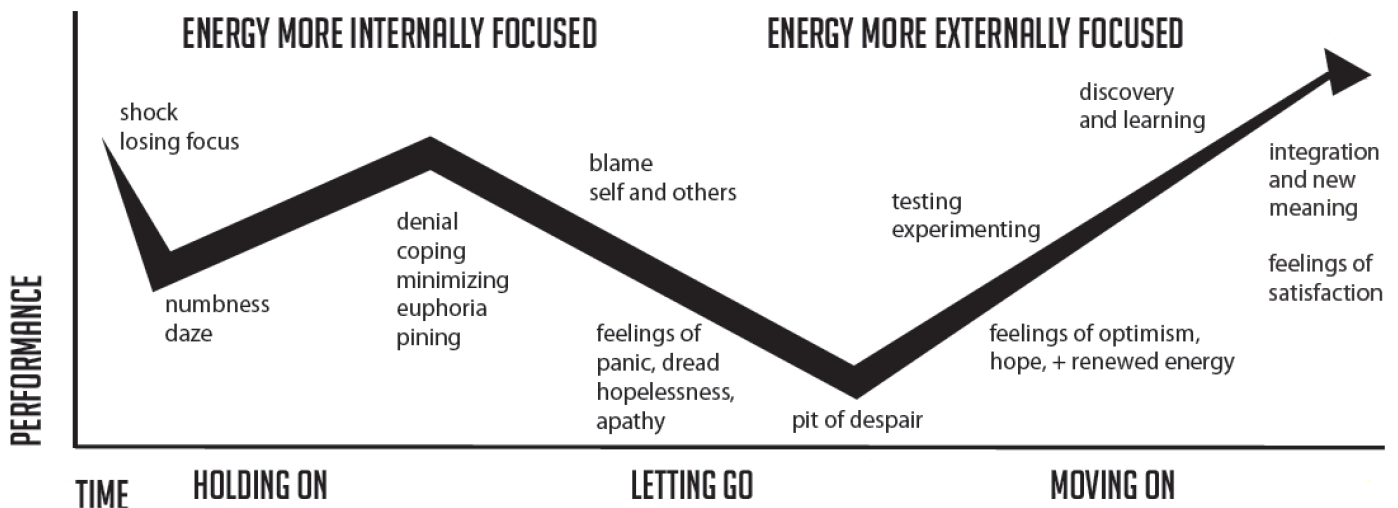
*Excerpts from "Transitions, Making Sense of Life's Changes" by William Bridges*

*"Every transition begins with an ending. We have to let go of the old thing before we can pick up the new one -not just outwardly, but inwardly, where we keep our connections to people and places that act a definitions of who we are."*



*"Endings are the first phase of transition. The second phase is a time of lostness and emptiness before "life" resumes and intelligible patterns and direction appear. The third phase is that of beginning anew."*

## THE PATTERN OF CHANGE AND TRANSITION





## Reducing Negative Thinking and Stress

Our Mind Can Only Gather Evidence to Support Our Dominant Thoughts (What we think about most of the time)



Improving the quality of our thinking and the questions we ask ourselves Improves the quality of our Life

Source of Inspiration for this chart: Maria Nemeth, Author: Mastering Life's Energies

Over the next week, take notice and write down negative thoughts that keep coming up. Notice how these thoughts cause you to gather evidence to support them. As a result, notice how these thoughts are impacting how you feel and how you show up in the world. Begin to notice your negative conclusions more quickly and replace them with resourceful conclusions.

Examples:

Negative Conclusion

Why does this keep happening to me?

People are idiots!

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Positive/Resourceful Conclusion

What am I supposed to be learning from this situation?

What is a more productive way to focus my efforts?

What will I do differently next time?

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# Your Success Trajectory

## Redefining Your Civilian Identity, Mission. Meaning and Purpose

### **Mission: An assignment or charge determined by one's self or assigned by others**

Your mission has changed as you look to the future. For many Veterans, having a sense of mission is a critical part of a functional and organized life. What do you see as your new mission? Is it to be a successful spouse, parent, student, employee/manager or to be in business for yourself? Find what drives you and spell it out to create your new mission.

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### **What inspires you?**

Defending your country and the people you served with created a significant level of meaning and purpose. It is now time to look for new areas of inspiration that will provide meaning and purpose for your new life and your future. Perhaps being of service to others in some special way can help to re-purpose your life, or perhaps setting an educational goal or choosing a challenging career path will provide the inspiration you are seeking.

### **Meaning: A sense of significance in the world that your life matters**

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### **Purpose: A sense of determination and resolve that is congruent with one's identity, meaning and mission**

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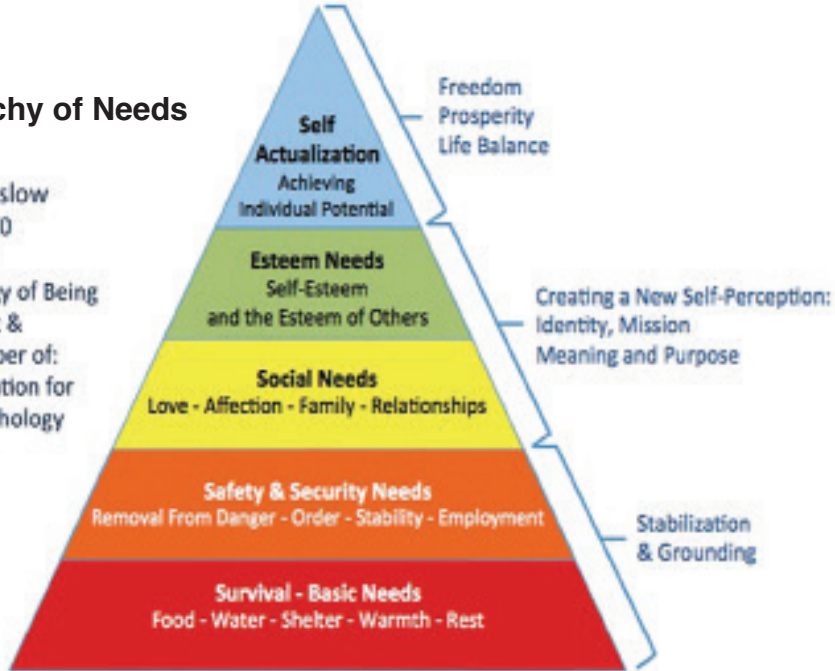
NOTE: Your Identity - Mission - Meaning - Purpose definitions are a declaration of who you are becoming. Re-visit your declarations often and continue to refine your statements over time. Be sure to save your previous versions to see and know the progress you have made.



# PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

## Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

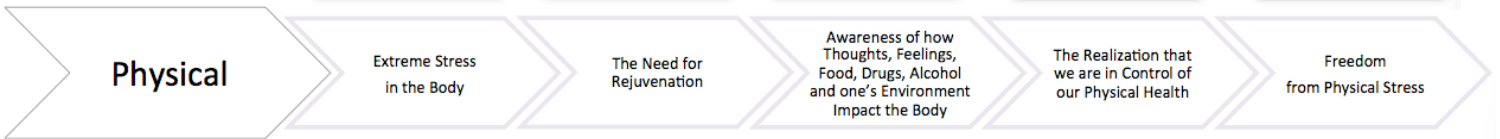
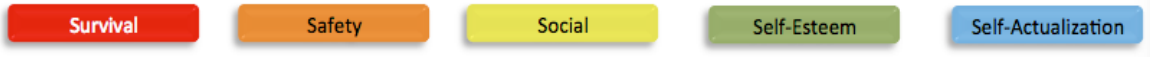
Abraham Maslow  
1908 – 1970  
Author:  
Toward a Psychology of Being  
Psychologist &  
Founding Member of:  
American Association for  
Humanistic Psychology



To move up on the pyramid, the lower needs must be met first.

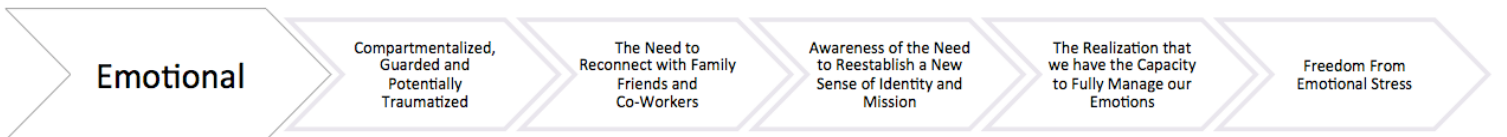
## Veteran Transition Map

NEEDS:



Present Circumstances: \_\_\_\_\_

Desired Outcome: \_\_\_\_\_



Present Circumstances: \_\_\_\_\_

Desired Outcome: \_\_\_\_\_



# PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

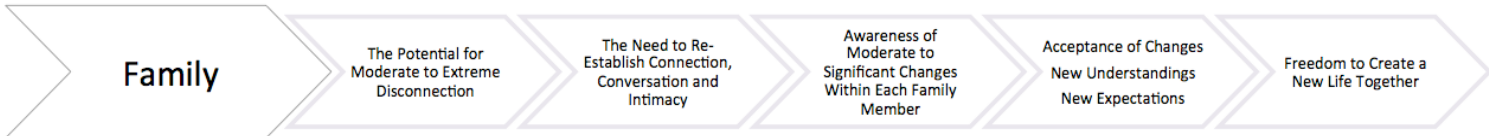
NEEDS:

- Survival
- Safety
- Social
- Self-Esteem
- Self-Actualization



Present Circumstances: \_\_\_\_\_

Desired Outcome: \_\_\_\_\_



Present Circumstances: \_\_\_\_\_

Desired Outcome: \_\_\_\_\_



Present Circumstances: \_\_\_\_\_

Desired Outcome: \_\_\_\_\_



Present Circumstances: \_\_\_\_\_

Desired Outcome: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**IF YOU OR A VETERAN YOU KNOW IS EXPERIENCING A CRISIS OR LIFE-THREATENING SITUATION, PLEASE CALL 800-273-8255, PRESS 1**



# PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Vet/Fam: \_\_\_\_\_

Peer Mentor or Advocate: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Next Action Plan Date (15, 30 or 60 days): \_\_\_\_\_

Vision: \_\_\_\_\_

Goals: \_\_\_\_\_

Completion Date							
Potential Obstacles							
How will I Accomplish it?							
What specific action will I take?							

