THINGS TIGERS CAN FIND CONFUSING ABOUT THE CIVVY STREET #1

**The transition from the Armed Forces to being functionally on your own is not easy.**

Some issues that Tigers can struggle to adjust to when they start dealing with Civvy Street are …

# PEOPLE SAY ONE THING AND DO ANOTHER

This conduct is almost unheard of in the Army. Most companies have their procedures and there is, of course, the law, but there is nothing preventing people from telling you what they will do and then not following through. That can be frustrating for Veterans. There is no good way to deal with this. You just need to watch out for yourself, read documents carefully, be patient when people are not doing what was expected. It is a massive change from the world where a simple signature will get a weapon out of the armoury to signing a ten-page contract to buy a phone. There is no solution apart from awareness, caution, and a lot of patience.

# NARCISSISM

The focus is not on you in the Armed Forces; there are always a few individual characters (some of them with a little *too* much character), however ultimately everyone is about what they bring to a mission. It is a team effort of shared goals, shared resources; shared support and energy. The result is servicemen and women who are not egotistical or self-centered. However, civilian life actively encourages a culture of narcissism. A good example is “selfies” on social media where everyone is signalling “look at me.”

# THE IMPORTANCE OF MATERIAL POSSESSIONS AND IMAGE

Servicemen and servicewomen are generally not materialistic. Prized possessions are often cars or motorbikes, and a decent Hi-Fi system. Veterans have learnt to value the important things in life — friends, family, health and happiness.

**The mainstream culture has gone in completely in the opposite direction.** For so many people, the most important things in life are material wealth and are driven by having the best brands. Not getting into material goods and the image trap is crucial to staying happy as a recently discharged Veteran.

# REDUNDANCIES AND BEING FIRED

The concept of redundancy is not familiar in the Armed Forces, although it has been forced upon the military by successive governments seeking savings. Your military employment has a definite, fixed term from the moment you sign up; it is rare for anyone to be “let go”. Conversely, this is the civilian work experience. In companies your contract of employment always comes with the possibility of early termination. It is an adjustment, and alien for servicemen and women, to consider commanders as managers seeking a reason to fire them rather than as officers striving to keep them as a dedicated and high-performing unit.

As a Veteran you will probably experience being made redundant from a civilian job. Some savings and your pension will help, most important though is a good support system of friends and families – your network is everything. As well as financial, losing a job can have an emotional impact. Considering your service life and the high-performance world you have come from, it is easy to take being made redundant as a harsher blow than it is. Maintain perspective, remember people lose their jobs all the time (nearly always sacrificed for financial expediency)*.* It does not compare to discharge from the Armed Forces.

# NEGOTIATING SALARIES

This subject is where military and corporate culture are completely at odds with each other. Armed Forces pay is transparent. Pay scales are published and based on rank and need (location, housing, family, etc.). **A job in Civvy Street’s salary will be open for negotiation.** You will not know what your employer is paying anyone else, including colleagues in exactly the same position as you. As a Veteran working in a company, it can create considerable anxiety - are you being paid your worth? Salary negotiations are crucial when you take a civilian job, do not allow a potential employer to balance a salary assumed on your pension. As a minimum always start your salary negotiation from the level of what you were receiving when serving, including any benefits and allowances. Research similar roles and situations to understand how they are compensated.

Clarify your second career aims, ask ‘the right questions’ and focus.