

Which Way Is Your Warrior Facing is an innovative and practical manual and journal for veterans wanting to navigate successfully into civilian life. It provides an operational map and compass to manage the complex challenges you may face.

WHICH WAY IS YOUR WARRIOR FACING?

**An operational manual for current serving
and veterans transitioning into civilian life**

By Barry Zworestine

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BARRY ZWORESTINE

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for current serving and veterans transitioning
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What People Are Saying About *Which Way Is Your Warrior Facing?*

Which Way is Your Warrior Facing is a home run! Barry uses terminology that resonates with transitioning military members and veterans - military terms that translate well to the transition process. He also leans on both his personal experience and the experiences of countless other veterans with whom he's worked. If you're a transitioning service member or a veteran, this will definitely hit close to home, and Barry provides tools to prepare, heal, and succeed in your next and most important mission - YOU! With utmost respect,

**– Jon Macaskill, Macaskill Consulting, Navy SEAL
Commander (Ret.).**

The journey of service to the nation presents us all with physiological, psychological, and social challenges. Everyone who has deployed on operations overseas will have experienced some degree of combat stress. Transition from the military can also be daunting. Through personal experience, Barry Zworestine understands, just as you conduct thorough battle preparation before a Mission, you should transition from Defence by undertaking similar processes. This work provides practical tools to assist you in this process. It is communicated in a clear and concise manner that all veterans

will appreciate. The expertise detailed in these pages will exceed your expectation.

– Colonel Greg D DSC, AM – former Commanding Officer –
The Australian SAS Regiment).

Barry understands the dichotomy of service and the true meaning of selflessness where veterans will give their lives for those they never knew. In his book he captures the essence of how being in service, no matter in what capacity, can truly change you at your core. Barry has defined a map and compass of the territory that can support you to understand and manage the impacts of your service as you struggle to help yourself. He has identified how difficult it can be to tear down the protective walls that veterans and service members build to stay safe. In "Which Way is Your Warrior Facing" Barry invites you to use the book to gain insight to support you to effectively navigate back into your social world and family. The book embodies an operationalised journey that will support your ability to bring the strengths and values of your warrior back home with you, and by doing so, create positive change. Which Way is Your Warrior Facing asks the hard questions and brings reality to the face of those who would look away from it-veterans and those supporting them. Barry speaks the truth of self-awareness and accountability many need after years of trauma and suffering. This book is a good wake up call for those still in the dark. Change is coming. Are you in control of it? Which Way is Your Warrior Facing will help you

move from the passenger seat of your vehicle into the driver's seat.

– **Tom Satterly**, CSM (R), Delta Force, Co-Founder/CEO All Secure Foundation.

*When we experience loss, we are often told – in subtle and overt ways – to “say goodbye and move on.” Veterans whose identities have been shaped within the crucible of military service, whose military Tribe has become family, are given the same message. Zworestine’s book *Which Way is Your Warrior Facing* spins on the axis of this essential truth – that successful transition is about reconnecting with the warrior within. As a combat veteran and psychologist, Zworestine keeps it real, making seamless adaptations of military concepts and language to help warriors thrive after their post-military lives. Full of powerful bites of wisdom, *Which Way is Your Warrior Facing* offers practical value to those in transition, including those stuck in limbo following a partial transition from the military Tribe.*

– **Doc Shauna Springer**, Best-selling author of *WARRIOR: How to Support Those Who Protect Us* and *BEYOND THE MILITARY: A Leader’s Handbook for Warrior Reintegration*.

The military does a great job of training soldiers how to go to and win wars; however, they are lacking when it comes to training soldiers how to go back home and re-integrate into civilian life following years of military life. Barry has cracked that code in this regard! And he does so with the heart of a true warrior, and the brain of a licensed psychologist who has been there and done that! Right up front, Barry reminds warriors who are battling demons of the core values they once learned while serving in the military, framing the entire book so one is in optimum receive mode and ready to embrace the warrior spirit within. The questions posed by Barry in this book force the reader to critically think through their individual circumstances in order to realize the opportunities that can still be possible. His operational lingo relates to the target audience and easily facilitates simple understanding of neuroscience concepts. This book should be standard issue to every military member transitioning from service... Barry is the real deal!

– **Sammy Villela**, U.S. Army Counterintelligence.

Barry Zworestine in his book, “Which Way is Your Warrior Facing” eases into your living room, sits down invited, and calmly and compassionately provides insight into your questions before you even know what to ask or think. It’s as if he is not only in your head, but he also knows what you need before YOU even realize you need it. Barry has a gift. An unremarkable gift of giving to those in need. After serving in a

warzone, he has faced death like many of us. As a psychologist, he doesn't just live in an intellectual world. Instead, he gives compassionate and poignant answers you know you can trust because he is one of us. If I were in a foxhole, scared to death, I would want Barry right beside me. Humble, kind, brilliant, and a realist, Barry helps the veteran not only know that he or she is going to be alright, no matter what, but that they too have a gift. Reading this book is one of the best gifts I could ever give myself. Thank you, Barry. Thank you for letting me into this wonderful tribe you have created.

– Lt Col Dr. Rev David F. Tharp,
CEO, Project Healing Heroes.

*A warrior's journey home is never complete, lacking a final destination at which point one might say "I'm finally there." Rather it is a series of engagements along the way that helps train the warrior's focus on how to live the next chapter of life more fully and purposefully. Barry Zworestine captures that approach beautifully with *Which Way is Your Warrior Facing?* as a highly engaging workbook. Barry weaves hard-won lessons learned and warrior stories from his own personal journey, as well as those of others, into a practical guide for your own successful transition into the unstructured world of civilian life. No matter what rank you achieved, what military*

job you had, or how much or how little combat action you've experienced, this book is for you. Thank you, Barry!

– **Jeffrey B. Kendall**, Brigadier General, USAF (Retired).

In working with numerous transitioning veterans in the Special Operations community, there are common themes - fear of loss, lack of community (the brotherhood), cultural shifts, etc. Barry Zworestine helps the reader unpack some of the "inner stuff" that is sometimes not addressed when transitioning alone or without a plan. An excellent read offering relevant models to help a vet (or coach of a vet) address the emotional side of transition. Some veterans do not transition well. This can then lead to depression and poor decision making. Barry's deep concern and passion for veterans has enabled him to write a piece of work that could potentially save lives - NO exaggeration! Grateful for Barry and his insight!

– **Joe Lara**, Previous Director of Programs at The Honor Foundation, U.S.A.

I have known Barry for 47 years. He is a great friend. We met in basic training in the Rhodesian Army Medical Corps. We lost contact for 40 years and thanks to social media, recently became re-connected. Being from the same 'tribe' it was like we were never apart. I consider it an honour to be asked to

review his book. It is one thing to have the knowledge on a subject, it is another thing altogether to also have the personal related experience. When these two attributes are combined with good judgement, that is my definition of wisdom. Barry possesses all three, knowledge, experience and good judgement and has combined them into a practical work of art that is “Which Way Is Your Warrior Facing?” A must read for anyone transitioning.

– **Nigel Dickinson**, Ex Combat Medic, Rhodesian Army, now a businessman and entrepreneur.

DISCLAIMER

This book is to help support your personal growth and transformation. It should not be taken or used as a substitute for appropriate professional assistance such as assessment, diagnosis, therapy, or medical support. How readers apply the information, insights, lessons, and tools in this book is their personal choice. By exercising this choice, readers assume full responsibility for their interpretations, understandings, and impact of the information. The author assumes no responsibility for the preferences or actions of the reader.

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CHAPTER 1:

The History Behind The Book

Around 2012 I began to contact several Rhodesian military groups on Facebook since I am a veteran of the Rhodesian military. It soon became apparent that these veterans and their families had a real need for support. Through Skype, email, and contributing articles and checklists to the various groups, I supported several soldiers and their partners worldwide. However, time restrictions soon made it clear that it was impossible to support more than a minimal number of people.

From this was born the vision of writing this book so that as wide a range of veterans and their families (not just from the Rhodesian Bush War) could benefit from the insights, understandings, and strategies that I have used over the years.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the Rhodesian Bush war, the war began around 1964. It ended in 1979, after which the country transitioned to a new black-majority government under Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. In 1980 the country was re-named Zimbabwe under Prime Minister Robert Mugabe.

Why the title?

What came to me was that, so often in times of transition (from military to civilian life) or with the impact of trauma, much of our behaviour tends to become self-destructive, either inwardly towards ourselves (alcohol, lifestyle, stress, depression) or

outwardly towards others and the territory we occupy. The goal would be a constructive and positive movement towards relating to ourselves, others, and our world in a way that respects and cares for who they and we are.

So often, Veterans are advised, “to move on. It’s all in the past, just let go.” The quality of service and self-sacrifice has defined every individual I have sat with. You should not be letting go of whom you were but instead reclaiming those extraordinary parts and values of your Warrior.

**The question is, at this moment,
which way is your Warrior facing?**

I believe that the initial strategy is to go back (on a rescue mission) and reclaim the positive attributes that define you. You are then in a stronger position to navigate forward, drawing on your insights, values, and tools. From this point, you will be better equipped with an appropriate map and compass to integrate into your new life as a civilian.

This book is not an academic or researched text. Nor is it a replacement for appropriate diagnosis and management. It’s a book based on endless hours of sitting with men from the Australian military and the Rhodesian Bush War, from World War II through Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan.

It’s a book based on my insights from being a combat veteran and “fighting medic” of the Rhodesian Bush War to the many messes and losses I faced during my post-war journey.

It's based on my experiences witnessing the veterans' deep pain, loss, and grief and their depression, stress, anxiety, anger, and everyday struggles to adjust to the unpredictable complexities of civilian life.

It's based on the universal and timeless experience and shared comradeship of veterans gathering with veterans, no matter whether they come from special forces units or regular units.

It's based on the stories of veterans' partners and children as they have desperately tried to find ways to understand and bridge the traumatic silence so typical of many veterans, as well as to deal with the war that returned home—the rage and reactivity, the alcohol, and flashbacks.

It's based on the deep feelings of loss, grief, disconnection, and despair that veterans have felt as they've tried to reconnect with those they love.

It's based on supporting veterans and their families to create a map and find a compass that will help them operate in the bewildering and unpredictable confusion of civilian life.

Finally, this book is based not just on the trust and insights that have emerged between myself and these remarkable people, not just on the deepening of my skills in treating trauma but also on my healing journey. As much as I have had an impact on those I have been privileged to sit with, they, in turn, have enriched, affected, and left me a wiser and better man, veteran, father, friend, husband, and psychologist.

I have drawn on operational lessons, principles, and military training. I have linked these factors to create a map and resource that veterans can draw on when transitioning to

civilian life. I have translated the brain and neuroscience into operational terms. Through this book, I hope you will become clearer about moving from an ambush mode to what I call an OP (observe, plan, think, and organise) mode. (An OP is also an observation post, where the terrain and those moving across it can be monitored without being visible.)

You will learn tools and insights to choose which way your Warrior faces. You will find language to support you to communicate with your partner, friends, children, and family. You will find help in identifying tools to learn to do your pull-throughs, keep your personal “barrel” clean, and avoid stoppages.

My wish is that this book will equip you with tools and understanding to initiate an immediate “cock, hook and look” when you find yourselves in a tight situation. (This is an immediate action drill to assess, and then clear a cartridge stuck in the breech of a weapon).

There is no rocket science in anything I have written. I leave the academics for others. This is an on-the-ground, in-territory, dusty, sweaty, practical book. I do not suggest anything that I have not personally used and continue to use to this day.

I wish you well on this journey and hope that, along the way, you find the peace you deserve and the connections with others that are important to you in whatever territory you currently find yourself.

I want to stress that you may be recently out of operations, or forty years may have passed since you were on active duty. But it is *never too late* to get help to change and heal.



What do you wish to get out of this book? Document what comes to you. If nothing, you can always return to this at a later stage.

“The challenge of change is to create your opportunities.”

CHAPTER 14:

The Letter

Many veterans over the years have talked about how difficult it was for them to communicate with their families. Often, I would find myself supporting them to create a script. I eventually wrote the letter below as something veterans could use to structure their thoughts and communication. Feel free to modify, add, and delete so that this fits what you want to say. Let the other person read it first, and then see if you can bridge into shared understanding.

Letter from one veteran to another (Veteran, Friend, Partner, etc).

Dear _____

Even though too much of where I've been and what I've seen cannot be spoken, and even though my present feels like such a struggle at times, both for you and me, I remain a proud veteran who still believes in loyalty and who's willing to put my life on the line for others. Many times it felt as if my brain remained on the battlefield. The sound of a car backfiring became the enemy coming in contact with me. Hitting the ground may have been a joke to you and others, but it was life and death to me. The flashbacks felt too real, and every corner was a potential ambush. I know that insisting that I sit in restaurants with my back against the wall was difficult for you

to understand or that trying to talk to me in a shopping centre when I was scanning everyone walking past was irritating. I know that at times you felt that after all these years, I should have moved on.

I wish things were that simple, as I was desperate to move on. But every day was another day at war - of being vigilant and of struggling with depression, stress, anxiety, grief, and trauma. For me, there has been no escape. My nights are full of nightmares, and my days find me wanting to escape to safety and silence. I've not given the best of myself to you all, and I've never rested well with this.

I know you've struggled with the bonds I still have with the soldiers I served and that, at times, this bond has felt more connected than the bond I have with you. I know you've felt frustrated by my refusal to talk about that time of my life. It's not that I don't want to share; it's that I can't. There are things that I've never talked about and that haunts me every day of my life. These are memories that I don't even share with other veterans. But I also have memories that I can't share with anyone who hasn't been there. I've tried to talk to civilians in the past, but the look in their eyes showed me how complex—in fact impossible—it was for them to understand me. I know my silence has hurt you, and for that, I am sorry. It isn't personal. I know you've said that you're willing to listen, and I've been grateful for that, but these are stories that I cannot share with you. Please understand.

At times, it feels as if I have a room full of memories that I've locked away not only from others but from myself. They still affect my mood, sleep, and ability to connect with others.

But I know and feel that my deepest fear is that if I ever began to open this box, I wouldn't be able to control what would come out. It's hard enough just dealing with the surface of it all.

I promise you that I will do whatever it takes to become a better partner, parent, and friend. I know that the ways I've tried to cope with the memories and experiences haven't always served me and others well. I'm willing to look at what I can do to heal and find more peace. Please try not to judge or push me into change. It's hard enough for me to begin to open up to my suffering, grief, and anger.

My moods have never been easy for you. I have times when I feel on edge for no apparent reason or feel down. Again, this is not personal. What I need is some time and space just to be alone to catch my breath.

I am grateful for the years in which you've stood by me and done your very best to support me, even when I behaved in ways that made life difficult for you. They say that there's no such thing as an unwounded warrior. We were young then, and we felt immortal. We never understood the price we would eventually pay for everything we did, saw, and experienced.

Age has not diminished the pain. If anything, the pain has only become more intense. But I am willing to change.



Write your letter

Having read the Letter, think about whether you would like to write your own letter. Think about what you would like to say but have struggled to do for whatever reason. Your letter can be your legacy. It can be the bridge to find your voice, heal your pain, create shared understanding, and reconnect with those around you. Take time to reflect and find your words. Create a few draft letters until you have found your words. I hope your journey through this book will support you with this mission. I have left you several pages. Take your time.

My Letter

CHAPTER 20:

Combat

Training as a soldier and being involved in combat no doubt can be traumatic and can have far-reaching effects on one's living situation, relationships, mental state, and well-being. It is possible, though, that to see war and to think about combat from only the point of view of an experience that has resulted in PTS may be to ignore other less spoken about aspects of this experience that could be used to facilitate healing and the ability and right for all veterans to live healthy, productive lives.

What about the intensity of combat – the living on edge in the presence of others and the intimate reliance on others? It's that feeling of being alive, the high of the hunt, the power of the warrior within, the knowing where you are, the location in a community, the camaraderie – it's about a level of meaning and experience that can leave one yearning for a lifetime afterwards in what veterans often experience as the humdrum routine of civilian life and the daily routine and predictable pattern of work.

Many veterans I have spoken to have yearned for the time when they truly felt like soldiers when the intensely close and intimate connectedness with their fellow soldiers that had bonded through the blood rite of combat could almost transcend the intimacy of marital relationships.

It's not just about trauma and stress but also about loss and grief and the difficulty of finding meaning in a different, less intense world.

Therefore, to heal is to acknowledge this loss and grief at many levels. It's about understanding that the seductive intensity of combat, with its unique sounds and smells, does not need to leave one feeling lost, bereft, and dislocated. It's about understanding that the memory of the thrill of the hunt, the "contact" (in the military sense of encountering the enemy), and the long days of hyperalert patrolling do not mean that the veteran is maladjusted.

It's about the acceptance of these feelings without guilt. It's about re-creating new and constructive challenges in civilian life. These can be challenges such as maintaining personal fitness and well-being, taking up a sport, or setting goals that can extend one and bring one back into the presence of others – running a marathon, walking for charity, swimming, and the like. The "edge," the feeling of being authentically alive, of being challenged, and of being with others, is not the sole right of war.

Part of combat training is about being taught how to kill. It's about being rewired for life in a way that is counter to being human in an institution that sanctions the need for aggression and the ability to take life.

Veterans need to make their peace with this rewiring, with the deep and often shameful awareness that forty years later, as a husband and father or wife and mother, there is still the sense of that part of oneself that is capable of the unspeakable.

Healing is not about burying or forgetting this. It's about allowing veterans to acknowledge, own, and respect this part of themselves. Veterans can use many of the lessons of war and combat to move forward in their civilian lives. Healing is about helping veterans draw on their strengths and the constructive lessons of soldiering.

Life and relationships are very much like a patrol. You need to think about where you are going and what you will need in the days ahead. You need to plan and ensure that you will work as a team. You need to listen, and when you are lost or uncertain, look at a map. You need to pace yourself and, when under significant levels of stress, draw on your reserves and tap into supplies of resilience. You need to trust and care for those around you. You need to exercise judgement. The qualities of planning, listening, preparation, consultation, care, respect, resilience, effort, and trust are the foundations of being human.

War need not just be an experience relegated to the psychiatric or counselling encounter. It need not be just traumatically stressful. Yes, it can be all of these. Still, the soldier never dies – memorial gatherings will live on as soldiers continue to gather, grieve, connect, and walk the road of memory.

Healing is about embracing the soldier, re-finding the warrior in the present, and drawing on the positive aspects from the past: who you were and who you still are. It's about remembering that, as veterans, you can still stand tall. It's about acknowledging grief, guilt, loss, and shame.

Combat need not just be the end of a good life, but the beginning of an even better life firmly grounded in the wisdom, learning, and experience found in that place called war.

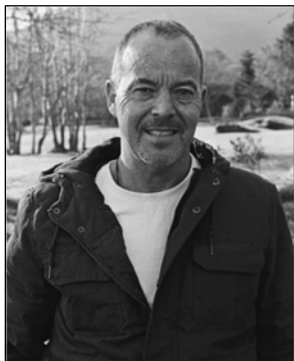
Successful transitioning demands an effective operation forward towards civilian territory. It demands planning, situational awareness, effective arcs of fire, the ability to understand the nature of the territory, and the necessity to adjust and adapt as needed. As important is the rescue mission back to collect your Warrior. You cannot leave yourself behind. This mission has two directives - the first is to bring your positive values and attributes back to your civilian. The second is to attend to any wounds and do what needs to be done to heal.

As you all manage to navigate your way through your transitioning territory, I wish you all a journey of healing, embracing your identity and finding your place and purpose.

Do not let others define you – stand firm within yourself. Stay faithful to your Tribe, your brothers, and sisters.

Watch out for each other.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Barry Zworestine was born in Southern Rhodesia (in what is now Zimbabwe) in 1953. After uneventful schooling in which he focused more on sports than on academics, he went to university in South Africa, where he spent several years training in education.

In 1976 he returned to Rhodesia to comply with national service requirements and was involved in the Rhodesian Bush War. On leaving the war in 1977, he spent several years living and working in South Africa before emigrating to Australia, where he lived for several years before settling in England for a brief period. After unsuccessfully attempting to mountain bike from Great Britain to Israel in 1984, he flew there instead and spent four years developing the British Council English Language Centre. While in Israel, he developed a passion for marathon running, which extended to ultra-marathon running after returning to South Africa to qualify as a clinical psychologist.

He returned to Australia in 2000, where he has remained ever since. In 2002, given his military experience and psychological qualifications, he was accepted as a contractor with a veteran organisation. This has continued to the present day. He is

passionate about music and plays the African drum, American Indian flute, and the Australian didgeridoo.

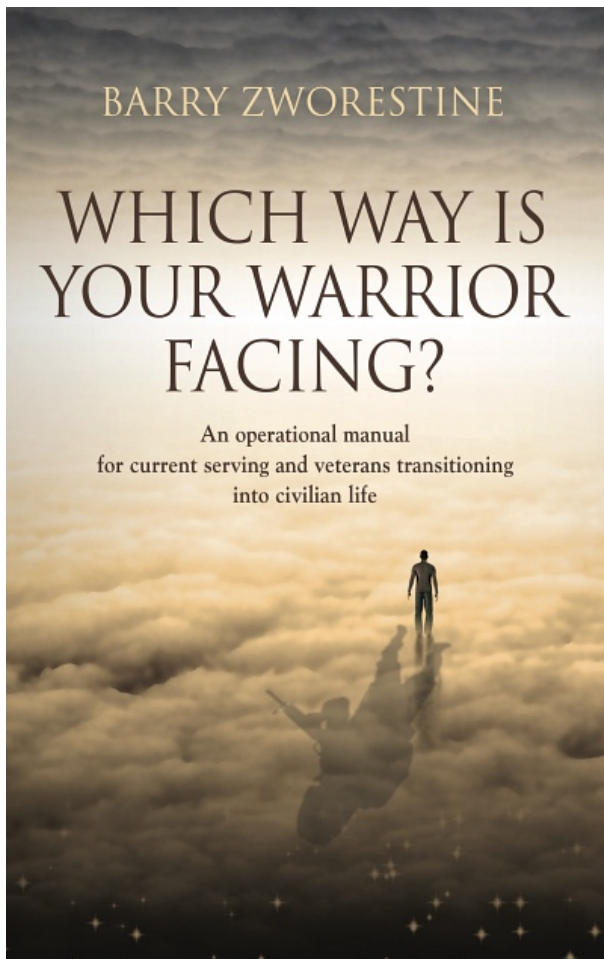
He is married to an extraordinary woman and has three children.



Figure 2 - The Author and his wife



Figure 3 - The Author and his sons



Which Way Is Your Warrior Facing is an innovative and practical manual and journal for veterans wanting to navigate successfully into civilian life. It provides an operational map and compass to manage the complex challenges you may face.

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