



The Unbroken

WINNING THE BATTLE AGAINST POST TRAUMATIC STRESS

Bruno Guevremont

a Product of Bad People

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x

Dedicated To The Fallen & To Those Who Serve

One of the main reasons I decided to get my shit together and help others battling PTSD was because I was tired of hearing about service members committing suicide. So many of our brothers and sisters who didn't need to die.

Suicide never benefits those we're trying to protect. They want you healthy and happy - as alive as you can possibly be.

You are never as alone as you think. If you don't think anybody is there for you, then put some of that weight on me *Bring it on*.

You can reach out at info@brunoguevremont.com.

If you or someone you know is contemplating suicide, please call:

Canada: 1-866 277 3553 [Suicide Action Montreal]

United States: 1-800 273 8255 [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline]

UK: 116 123 [Samaritans' helpline]

Australia: 1-300 22 4636 [Beyondblue helpline]

New Zealand: 09 5222 999 (in Auckland) - 0800 543 354 (outside of Auckland) [Lifeline support & counseling]

24/7 Peer Support: Vets4Warriors 1-855-838-8255

Website: <http://www.vets4warriors.com>

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Prologue

I had an incredible desire to serve from a very early age. I wanted to make this world a better place. I wanted to stand up to the bastards responsible for 9/11 - the attack that would change the world forever. I still remember that day; I knew, right then and there, we were going to war. I jumped at the first opportunity to stand up against evil and work alongside the Americans, Brits, Aussies, Kiwis and other NATO countries to secure Kabul and assist Afghans in starting their own government.

We were fighting for democracy. The patriotism and energy in the air was magnetic. The feeling of camaraderie was unlike anything I'd ever been a part of - like a sports team, family and support system - all wrapped in one.

And we were all there for one reason. *To kick some ass.*

The military trained me, built me, to surpass my natural potential. At first, I was a Weapons Technician and Paratrooper. Then I transferred to become a Clearance Diver and explosives expert in the Royal Canadian Navy. I was in charge of multi-million dollar equipment and given the highest clearance and authorization. I was valuable to the government. I was a warrior with a purpose.

And then, in just a matter of seconds, I wasn't.

I had 15 years and 3 deployments under my belt when I was released from service for PTSD. It felt as if everything I'd known and loved had been stripped away from me.

All of the confidence I had collected over the years crumbled. A million tools in my belt, but zero idea how they translated into anything aside from being a damn warrior. I lost my identity, and as much as I tried to integrate back into the world, I kept coming to the same conclusion - this world wasn't mine. This was the *civilian world*, the world that warriors like us dedicated our lives to protect.

I fooled others into believing I was okay, but I was far from it. I was depressed, anxious, paranoid, delusional and crazy. I was allowing my injury to take the wheel. But then I made a choice. I chose to rise above my injury and get healthy for the people I love, climbing out of darkness to help others do the same.

I

The Suicide Bomber

“The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.”

- Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

Sweat.

Water mixed with ammonia and salt.

How can I smell that?

I don't know if it's mine or his, but I know it's wet by the way it stains the burlap vest in front of me. The vest contains explosives, along with rebar and all kinds of shrapnel. In every section, an explosive, wires and detonators that could take the life of the suicide bomber in my custody, along with the crazy-ass working on his jacket - me. *Not to mention the better half of the next two city blocks.*

Of course, there are protective measures for these situations - the EOD 9 - the astronaut-looking suit you've seen in movies like, *The Hurt Locker*.

EOD9: Constructed from a flame retardant Nomex/Kevlar mix with ballistic panels to thwart fragmentation, impact, heat and flame. The helmet includes a ventilation system; it can be fitted with circulating ice cold water to regulate temperature.

This is the type of protective gear I would normally wear in this type of situation. But not today. 12 minutes ago, I was listening to Norah Jones (it's what I listened to between calls). So, yeah, here I am disarming a bomb in nothing but my damn combats and flak vest. Not that it would even matter at this range. I'd be blown to pieces either way.

I'd seen my share of carnage. Hell, less than an hour into my first tour in Kandahar I was dispatched to the Provincial Governor's palace where three suicide bombers had just blown themselves up in a public market full of locals. It was a bloody mess.

So when a call comes in, we can't help but mentally prepare ourselves for a post-blast scene.

This job requires a numbness, one that toughens you - protects you - from within. For times when you see Coalition Soldiers being taken from their families and the world, lying lifeless in the rubble of Afghanistan. You step past this shit knowing each step of recon and recovery could be your last should the enemy detonate a secondary explosion while you're sifting through the bait of the first blast.

Our job is supposed to be to find these things first. And a lot of the times, we do. My team was responsible for taking over 100 explosives out of action. But sometimes, finding an IED can be like finding a needle in a haystack. And when you miss one and another set of dog tags gets sent home, you can't help but take it personally.

Dammit. Maybe if I would've found that one sooner. But we can't be everywhere all the time.

It's not your fault, of course, but that doesn't make it feel like less of a burden. And in this job, when you relax, even for a second, things can go sideways, people die. The innocent die. Women, children, the elderly... just dead.

Typically, the bomber would have been shot and killed prior to our arrival, and our job would be to pull the bomb off his lifeless body with a robot.

This time was different.

On this call, the explosive in question was still active, being worn by a live perpetrator. As I listen to the details of the op, I mentally check off the different ways in which the bomber could possibly detonate an IED. The four I'm on the lookout for:

Timer: Just like in the movies - a second hand ticking or a digitized representation of death on your doorstep. Nothing to discuss. When time runs out, it runs out for everyone in the area.

Anti-removal: Designed to prevent tampering. When you try to remove the vest, it detonates.

Chicken switch: A situation where a second perpetrator hides outside the blast zone with binoculars and a cell phone or remote. They can set off the bomb if the bomber is shot or the bomb doesn't detonate the first time. They press the button, at any time... and it detonates. If someone were lurking on the outside they'd probably choose to kill a member of my team or a coalition team over Afghan police officers. We're a bit higher on their totem pole.

Victim-operated: The bomber has to detonate the device on his own volition, usually using connected switches.

Intel reported that the bomber was *not expired*. He was very much alive, as were the switches dangling from both of his sides, telling me immediately that there is at least one victim-operated threat. So as long as his thumbs don't find their way to the switches, we've got a chance. He was being detained by two Afghan police officers. Every second it would have taken to put on my EOD9 was another second those two officers would be stuck within death's reach. So I opted not to.

As I get to the bomber it feels like I walk into a 6' x 6' box of heat and electricity, humidity and tension. The negative energy was palpable. The police officers are terrified, but the suicide bomber is strangely calm. And so I am strangely calm. But also super focused. As soon as the enemy's arms are safely bound and fastened by plastic ties to the fence behind him, I relieve the officers. With the imminent loss of life off the table, I further assess the situation, making sure the immediate and surrounding areas are safe and secure.

At the very worst, the bomber is just a footsoldier - nowhere near the head of the snake. But if you can disarm the bomb and save the bomber, you might just get information that could bring down the entire network. And *that's* worth risking your life for.

Right, let's do this shit!

The "hot box" feels even hotter now. My training cycles through my every thought. I'm alert, sharp and focused, analyzing the situation.

I look the device over. I recognize it plain as day. Every detail etched into my mind, like your first address or a lover's phone number. I'm locked in. I understand the wires, the power source, the switches, the whole circuit. I take them, in order, between the blades of my wire cutter.

And then the man starts to murmur.

“راوغ هن هتلد هز. هرک و هرس ار هتسرم”

It sounds as gibberish as it looks, but strangely, there's no passion behind it. No venom. No animosity. It sounds more like... defeat. Almost apologetic.

It's just a gut feeling, but whatever he's telling me seems more about wherever it is he came from than his current position, zap-strapped to a chain link fence with 30 lbs of explosives ornamenting his chest.

I wish I could communicate with him, but he doesn't understand English, let alone le français. But he needs to shut the hell up if we're going to survive this. He relinquishes, but only after tasting the leather from the glove I put across his mouth as I physically pleaded with him to let me do my job.

“Be quiet if you want to get out of here, I gotta get this done. I got other calls after this one. It's a busy day, son.”

He nods, *I think*.

Good enough.

We continue.

Once again I talk myself through the wires, the explosive, the switches, and know how many different ways the bomb can go off if we're not extremely careful. I exit the internal conversation as assuringly as possible.

“I got this,” I say. It is very freaking clear that I believe in what I'm doing. The intensity and the heat in the “box” is rising.

I'm on fire.

I re-examine the switches. I can see they make up the circuit between the power source, the detonators and the explosives. It needs to be done the right way. If I remove any one of those components in the wrong sequence...

Boom.

I snip the wires, which isn't exactly best practice, but the situation dictates the protocol. The bomb is disarmed. It's time to remove the vest. I'm either going to be the first Canadian to ever do this...or I'm not. If it blows, I'll be adding to history instead of making it. Except it doesn't.

And once the vest is completely removed, the man in front of me becomes human again. He offers a sigh, so exhaustive and hard that it lowers the intensity and heat of the situation.

The vest is fully dismantled before I let the investigating team come down and the interrogation begins. The bomber stays bound to the fence behind him while an interpreter goes to work. And then we discover the truth, that the man is actually mentally challenged. He's weak. He'd been starved for two weeks before being coerced into wearing the jacket, and threatened with having his entire family killed if he didn't follow through with the operation. And somehow, despite our differences, I already knew that inside.

How could I feel that?

It's easy when everybody is a bad guy, but in one instant, this man changed the face of war. He wasn't an enemy. He was just hurting. And I wasn't angry at him. I was just glad. Glad I was called in, and glad that all of us made it out of that “hot box” alive.

Because he didn't deserve to die either.

¹ Translation: “Help me, I don't want to be here.”

I
Legend

- × **Remember your duty & responsibility**
- × **Understand perspectives of others**
- × **You were trained to be a badass**
- × **Rely on your training**

III

The Depths of Darkness

“The strongest, the least digested parts of your experience can rise up and put you back where you were when they occurred; all the rest of you stands back and weeps.”

- Peter Straub, The Throat

Who the hell am I anymore?

Just a hopped-up-on-life adrenaline junkie on high alert, freshly released into a world that isn't mine. Going through the motions of daily rituals I haven't seen in a decade and a half. I am not functioning like a normal member of society, laying here, spiraling into the depths of my own warped mind.

I don't know who to trust. Sometimes I don't even know where I am. Last week, I woke up standing on a damn jetty. One minute I'm working at my desk; an hour and a half later, I'm staring into the ocean on a wooden dock.

How the hell did I even get here?

I'm supposed to be reintegrating back into society, but I'm not ready. I'm not coping well and I can't sleep. And, of course, there's the night terrors. They keep me in a constant state of exhaustion and confusion. I'm not talking about just a couple of nights; I'm talking a couple of months.

You always look for some kind of indicator when they're happening, too. Like the spinning top from the movie Inception - something to let you know it's not real. Or something to let you know it is real, like the sweat stain on the burlap explosive container. Which, ironically, is somewhat better. When shit gets real, you can rely on your skill set to get you out; doesn't matter how small the percentage of chance. But if you're stuck in a dream and can't tell what's real, there is no escape.

Your mind takes you back to the chaos of battle - gunfire, explosions, the same anxiety. And slowly over time, relentlessly and unforgivingly, an idea starts to form... the longing for death. A recurring thought, burrowing its way through your mind like a worm through a rotten apple.

I try to lay down, close my eyes, and zone off into a catatonic state, but that doesn't work too often. If I do knock out for a bit I make sure to do it alone. You forget about the comforts of sleeping with someone beside you. It's impossible with how violent your body whips around, reacting to stimuli running through your head throughout the night. And when you do wake up, the sheets are so wet, you have to apologize for the way they stick to your partner's skin. As if you didn't feel out of place enough with all the shit going on inside your head.

It seems like people forget most of their dreams, but I could remember every single detail of my night terrors - vividly. But it wasn't good enough for the delusions to only feed at night.

They fed during the day, too.

I can't begin to describe the embarrassment of what it's like to find out that crystal clear, real events, turned out to be completely fictitious. Panic attacks alone in my living room, without a single threat of danger near, and yet, my chest is caving in on itself. Like this big black ball is inside my ribcage telling me - warning me - that **people are trying to hurt me**. That people are coming for me.

I can't breathe. I can't stop blinking. And between my shuttering eyes, I see the cars pass by my house - one after another. They're driving to work. Or Starbucks. They're all out to get at me. Now, somewhere inside, I *know* they're normal people going about their own lives. But I think they hate me. I think they're coming for me, to kill me. My arms are tingling. I can't feel my fingers.

And even though I know I'm not having a heart attack, *it's so goddam real*. I know it's not real, but it feels real as hell! Am I going insane? Is this where I lose it?

It's like being in *The Matrix*, jumping back and forth between two different worlds. The more you do it, the less you can tell the difference between the two.

I'm weak. Mentally unstable. The people I love can't help me because they don't know how. And I sure as hell can't help them help me. So they are just potential collateral damage to me now. I'm worthless. They're better off without me. I don't want to hurt them.

But I will.

I can only cause damage to those around me. Especially other vets. Like wolves, we roll in packs and smell blood in the air a mile away. The downside is, when you're sick, you often infect the entire pack.

I can't let this pain show. And so I hide. In my basement or living room with the curtains drawn, of all places. And as safe as that bunker might have felt, it was just restricting me even further. I start drinking more and more just to cope.

Drinking beer alone on a random afternoon has a different feel to it than our standard, scheduled, mess hall celebrations back in the service. A place we let our hair down. Booze and war stories told in jubilation. Heroes supported and confidence refueled. A community of soldiers trading the atrocities of the world for the innocence of the moment.

I snap back to reality, looking down at the translucent orange pill bottle in my hand.

 **WHEN TAKING THIS MEDICATION :** 
DO NOT DRINK ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES.

Too late. I'm 6 deep into a 24 pack. I can't even remember how many of these pills I've swallowed today. Offhand, it's somewhere between 6-10 in the morning. Then 10-12 at night. Let's just call it an even 20.

We're not talking aspirin here.

Some are for depression, some for anxiety; one of them has this side effect that actually shocks my brain, it feels like a lightning storm inside my head, but it's worth it [*LIGHTNING CRACKS*] because the medication gives me the slightest break from all this, it gives me breathing space for small pockets in the day, an opening, and opportunity to take just a single step forward [*LIGHTNING CRACKS*].

The medication slows these racing thoughts.

This lightning, this pain becomes a rush of reality. The more it strikes, the more I look forward to it, the more comfort the pain provides, because it's something tangible; something that makes me feel again. And much like the drugs and alcohol, it's addicting. Is it normal to look forward to a shock to the brain?

And now *I'm that guy*. The ticking time bomb the civilian world was afraid of. I've stood proudly atop mountain ranges, Afghan deserts, a C-130 with a loaded parachute. And right now, I'm lying on the floor in my basement, in the fetal position, living up to that crazy Veteran stereotype we all swore didn't apply to us. Trying to solve that problem by jumping on a different grenade of another stereotype, the alcoholic. And another, the pill popper. And whatever other stigma I can latch onto and identify myself by. Things turn for the worst.

I can't take this suffering anymore.

How many times have I looked at that nightstand and wished there was handgun inside? Something to stop the pain. Or dreamt of crashing my car into the big rock face that I passed on the way to base? People died there all the time, so nobody would know I did it on purpose. My family would get the insurance money and this constant pain would end.

Very soon, I'm afraid I'm going to think the easy way out is the right way out. The only way out.

This is the devil's door. Suicide.

First, it's just a passing thought that's quickly ignored. Then it swells into an idea with a voice. A whisper that amplifies to a scream, leading to an action. I grab a notepad and before you know it, I've written down every step it would take to successfully kill myself.

I'm 20/80 on this right now.

It's the easy way out. *I know this*. But it feels like I know it a little less than I did yesterday. And the day before that.

I'm 40/60. I'm scared as hell, but it feels like the darkness is calling me. It is the only way out of this mess. I study suicide. Opinions, ramifications, methods. My research is intense and thorough, just as I've been trained to operate.

I think of my loved ones most. But my thoughts aren't working right. They're warped. They must be. Suicide doesn't feel selfish. It feels like I would be relieving the world of some kind of darkness. It feels warranted and just. It feels deserved. In the service, I was the rising tide that floated all ships. But now, in the civilian world, I'm the anchor. A weight on my loved ones, friends, and Veteran family. If I haven't had enough of this world, it's sure as hell had enough of me.

I'm 60/40. Feeling like I'm past the point of no return on this.

I'm desperate for relief. To do something right. Not for me, but for those I'm holding down and endangering. This would be a gift to them, a weight off their shoulders. Which means it's not selfish. It's actually selfless. *Can that be right??*

I'm 80/20. I need to leave this planet. And I'm ready to go.

When I see myself in the mirror. The same guy who walked down that dirt road and disarmed a live suicide bomber.

I took the jacket off that man. I know I did. So how am I seeing it again in the mirror right now? Live and armed all over again. Now strapped to *my* chest. I thought I'd done my job in Kandahar and neutralized the threat. Instead, all I'd done was transfer the burden onto myself. I don't even know how I got this thing on - outfitted, weighing me down, and waiting for me to blow the charges.

“Help me. I don't want to be here,” I murmur.

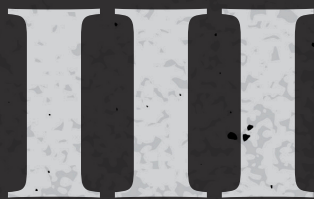
I need someone to save me.

And that's when it hits me. The most qualified person is the guy in the mirror staring back at me, asking me for help. The one who has done it before. A warrior who was built for this exact situation.

We're in this together. I've been here before. I know what I'm doing. And you can **trust me**.

II
Legend

- × **Those who love you want you here, happy & healthy**
- × **You were trained to overcome bad situations**
- × **It is your responsibility to get better**
- × **Only you can help yourself**



The Unbroken

“... he who makes a beast of himself gets rid of the pain of being a man.”

- Dr. Samuel Johnson

Wired

I hate to break the news to you, but I'm not a doctor. All I can do is share what I've learned to help me take responsibility for my injury and put it in its place. As I understand it, PTSD affects the brain's neural pathways, connected nerves along which electrical impulses travel throughout your body. At the most basic level, these pathways exist to keep you alive. If you need food in your mouth, your brain creates a neural pathway to send the message to your jaw to open wide.

When the mind thinks it's in a place of danger, it works overtime carving out more of these pathways to assist in your survival. Adrenaline is released. Your senses and reflexes are enhanced. It's more than situational awareness; it's an intense heightened alertness, even when you don't actually need it.

Now, this elevated awareness, anxiety, and sensitivity is critical when you're in a war zone. But when you're back home filling up your truck before church, it does nothing but send your mind back to a time and place you don't need to be reminded of.

Rewired

The same way we created new pathways for the dangers overseas, we can also create new ones to mitigate our bodies' reactions to stresses of the civilian world. If you convince your mind that it has a need, it will create the most efficient neural pathway to satisfy that request. If you can wrap your head around the science behind how these neural pathways work, you can honestly accomplish anything.

The same principles apply to anything you want to do or learn in life. As you practice, your mind and body create more efficient paths to execute. You become quicker, better, more efficient. Our brain is a machine that learns, and we can instruct it to rewire healthier, more practical, appropriate responses to civilian world stimuli.

In theory, simply telling yourself you want something gives a direct command to your central nervous system to create a pathway for your body to fulfill. Because the body has no choice but to listen to the mind, as the old saying goes, *"any direction you can will the mind, the body will follow."*

When we start replacing those neural pathways with healthier ones, we free ourselves of our injury's power over us. But the work doesn't end there. You may need to replace other unhealthy aspects of your life, too.

There's a story I heard one day...

A Soldier with PTSD fell in a hole and couldn't get out.

A Senior NCO went by and the Soldier with PTSD called out for help. The Senior NCO yelled at him to suck it up, dig deep & drive on. Then he threw him a shovel. But the Soldier with PTSD could not suck it up and drive on, so he dug the hole deeper.

A Senior Officer went by and the Soldier with PTSD called out for help. The Senior Officer told him to use the tools your Senior NCO has given you then threw him a bucket. But the Soldier with PTSD was using the tools his Senior NCO gave him, so he dug the hole deeper and filled the bucket.

A psychiatrist walked by. The Soldier with PTSD said, "Help! I can't get out!" The psychiatrist gave him some drugs and said, "Take this. It will relieve the pain." The Soldier with PTSD said thanks, but when the pills ran out, he was still in the hole.

A well-known psychologist rode by and heard the Soldier with PTSD crying for help. He stopped and asked, "How did you get there? Were you born there? Did your parents put you there? Tell me about yourself, it will alleviate your sense of loneliness." So the Soldier with PTSD talked with him for an hour, then the psychologist had to leave, but he said he'd be back next week. The Soldier with PTSD thanked him, but he was still in the hole.

A priest came by. The Soldier with PTSD called for help. The priest gave him a Bible and said, "I'll say a prayer for you." He got down on his knees and prayed for the Soldier with PTSD, then he left. The Soldier with PTSD was very grateful, he read the Bible, but he was still stuck in the hole.

A recovering Soldier with PTSD happened to be passing by. The Soldier with PTSD cried out, "Hey, help me. I'm stuck in this hole!" Right away the recovering Soldier with PTSD jumped down in the hole with him. The Soldier with PTSD said, "What are you doing? Now we're both stuck here!!" But the recovering Soldier with PTSD said,

**“Calm down. It's okay. I've been here before.
I know how to get out.”**

- Unknown Author

In order to heal, reaching out and helping others is one of the best prescriptions I can recommend. But before we can help others we must help ourselves. It is primordial that we are healthy and solid before we go down the rabbit hole with our brothers and sisters.

Beware of the den

Veterans are wolves. As motivational as that parable may be, that type of pack mentality can work against you as quickly as it does for you. I was a part of it for years. We sit at the local coffee shop for hours, talking about the government screwing us, the civilian world screwing us, the corporate world screwing us. Everybody is screwing us! What we don't realize is...

We are screwing ourselves.

We shower each other with misery to feel comfortable about bathing in our own. We come home and the first thing we do over our morning cup of coffee is toss our brothers and sisters into a hornet nest. It's happening in VAs and coffee shops all over the world - every single day. Once you notice it, it becomes exhausting to witness.

Veterans turning other Veterans into victims, enabling each other to say "poor me" and put the responsibility of fixing ourselves on anyone else but ourselves. I've looked other Veterans in the eye and explained to them how unfair the world was to them - before they even came to that conclusion themselves. Almost as if I was planting it in their head, and for the worst reasons.

Not because it was true, but because I was projecting to corroborate my own story. My own coping mechanism was to cripple others.

We do this to justify laziness and inaction, ignoring the work we need to do on ourselves. To push it aside for another afternoon of drinking beer and playing Call of Duty in our own personal purgatory.

It's time to wake up, ladies and gentlemen. Stop feeling sorry for yourselves and act. Everybody in the world has demons. You signed the dotted line. That makes it your duty to use your training for the good of mankind. So get to work.

It's your responsibility to get better.

Nobody can do it for you. The only thing that separates losers and winners is how they deal with their demons. Become the winner you know you are - become the warrior again - and act.

Separate yourself from anything that's allowing you or enabling you to feel sorry for yourself. Yes, that's your drinking buddies. Yes, that's your self-loathing Veteran buddies. It is critical to separate yourself from negative situations and individuals. Help yourself first, then go back and help others. Cut anything out of your life that is holding you back from health, progress and happiness.

How can we help other warriors if we are allowing ourselves to fall? We were trained to focus on our goal, our mission, and what we can do - to perfection - to make sure we all make it out alive. Because we all go home, or nobody goes home.

That is our standard.

It's why we signed on the dotted line. To stop more people from dying. And I for one, have seen too many Veterans pass me by, wearing smiles on their faces before taking their own lives.

Separate yourself from negative situations and individuals. Help yourself first, then go back and help others. Cut anything out of your life that is holding you back from health, progress & happiness.

Getting better requires a lot of hard work. It means taking responsibility and accountability, which I understand can feel cumbersome and overwhelming, but it's not the ball and chain you think it is. It's a tool, a battery, a power source to provide you fuel.

If you take care of yourself and all of your collective shit - whether it be making your bed, cleaning your weapon, showing up on time - your unit has a much better chance to be successful.

Just move

Like the brain, the body is a machine that learns and remembers. So start moving. Make a small change. Even if it is one tiny step forward, it is a step forward, in the right direction. Progress happens in small increments repeated over time. And then you build from there. When things get unmanageable and overwhelming, repeat to yourself, "just move". In any increment, progress is progress.

If you can only do one pushup, then you do that one pushup every single day. Your muscles remember and strengthen. Then go for two a day. You can apply this same principle to every area of your life.

In the military, routines were ingrained in our lives without us having to think much for ourselves. Wake up at this time, be here by this time, complete this mission by this time (and of course, hurry up and wait for the rest of the time). You set routines on deployment and during your training so use the same fundamentals and start building better habits.

Always remember, you are a valuable trained asset to whatever unit you choose.

It only takes one small change. If you replace just one bad habit with one good habit, it can change your life. Try replacing one of your bad habits with a ten minute workout. Replace alcohol with pushups for a few weeks and see the difference. Hell, make a video of you before and after and just notice the changes that others can see. The world loves you at your best.

You are a warrior

The government spends an average of one million dollars training every warrior throughout their careers. Your purpose and skill set will never expire. There are crops of young men and women returning from overseas with leaderships skills and life lessons that can't be taught in any institution on the planet. No other organization out there will invest that amount in their employees. You are all solution-oriented, experienced, trustworthy individuals people can count on. Find something that feeds your purpose and passion. Maybe it's helping Veterans who are in the same position as you. Just move in a forward direction and become what you want to be.

Rebuild. You've trained for this. You are trained to train. So train for a new position, doing whatever you've ever dreamt of. Once you set your sights, you'll see that Veterans are actually trained to conquer whatever they want in the civilian world if they pursue it. So go get it!

Nobody has their shit together all the time. You fatigue. I am still conscious that the easy way out exists, but it is no longer an option. I chose the high road - the right road that leads to the people I love, who depend on me to make the right choices for their well-being.

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping me get this all off of my chest. And always remember...

**You are powerful.
You are still a badass warrior.**

Own the day!

III
Legend

- × **Understand the injury affects your brain & thinking**
- × **Replace negativity & anything hindering growth**
- × **Just move forward**
- × **You are a warrior**
- × **You Got This**



Bruno Guevremont

I spent 15 years with the Canadian Armed Forces, serving two tours in Afghanistan. I was trained as a Weapons Specialist, Paratrooper, Navy Diver, and spent a good portion of my military career as a member of a Canadian Counter Improvised Explosive Disposal Team.

I am also the only member of the Canadian Forces to ever dismantle an explosive vest off a live suicide bomber.

Upside down.

Just joking about that last part. Moving on...

After returning home from my second tour in Afghanistan, I couldn't function like a normal member of society. I was on high alert at all times, uncomfortable around others, and spiraling into the depths of my own warped mind.

I remember staring at my nightstand, and wishing there was a handgun inside to stop the pain. And then I'd get out of bed, get dressed and head out. This is how I started my day. I'd drive to the base and dream of crashing my car into the big rock face that I passed on the way. There were car crash casualties there all the time, so nobody would know I did it on purpose. My family would get the insurance money and this constant pain would end.

Around this same time, I was diagnosed with PTSD and medically released from the Canadian Armed Forces. I could've believed I was broken and gave up right there, but then I would think of my little guy growing up without a dad.

Thank God for my little guy. If it weren't for him, I wouldn't be here today helping others.

I went on a quest, a one man mission to find a cure.

This shit wasn't about me anymore. It was all for my son. I forced myself to find ways to recover. But the first step was taking responsibility and accepting that I signed up for this. I was a warrior.

I dropped my ego and asked for help.
I chased my passions and opened my own gym.
I completed an expedition in the North Pole.
I led Team Canada in the Invictus Games.
I stepped back into the roles I was meant for - survivor, warrior, leader.
I became a voice for my brothers and sisters who serve.

Today, I'm building a community, bringing those who serve together to conquer PTSD. I'm also fortunate to be able to help thousands of people transform their lives and businesses - from CEOs and influencers to athletes and celebrities (not to mention, some of the biggest veterans and charity organizations in Canada).