

## A Marine Veteran reclaims her motivation

**Interviewee:** I'm Jody. I served in the United States Marine Corps from 2000 to 2005. I was stationed at Camp Pendleton, California, and I did two tours in Iraq. I was an O231 Intelligence Analyst. My job actually became really purposeful and gained a whole lot of meaning once we deployed. Your job essentially is protecting troops, keeping them out of danger, and shaping the battlefield.

After serving two tours in Iraq and getting out of the Marine Corps, I found myself back home in Connecticut in a very small town. I was a bartender and I was also a waitress, and that was challenging for me. Reading off the specials to customers, as opposed to briefing, you know, a general on where he should or shouldn't put his troops and where we're getting, you know, the most threats from, that was humbling, to say the least.

I think the struggle was finding my purpose and trying to figure out what exactly I wanted to do, knowing that I couldn't, I couldn't spend the rest of my time being in a small town after all the things that I had seen and done and accomplished in the Marine Corps.

I then faced another challenge. I was married, so when our marriage hit a rough spot, we both decided to end the marriage and I decided to go back overseas. I did six months in Iraq and then a year in Afghanistan. After Afghanistan, after that tour coming back, that's when the light really kicked off on where I should be. I knew that if I was going to move forward and investigate any other career field or do anything that was going to be a positive change, I needed to consult, consult other people. And so that led me to counselling.

You know, you harbor certain things inside you. You realize when you talk about them that they're not so bad or that they're not as bad as you think they are. I think the growth and the therapy were simultaneous. But coming upon my new purpose, that was, that was by being more my authentic self. I just became more active in empathizing with other people, volunteering, and sharing my story with other people, and that really set the stage for me to go into my current profession.

I'm an executive director of a women's nonprofit organization. And a lot of what we do is meet the basic needs of women Veterans.

If you need help, get it. It's...there's nothing shameful about it. The rewards that you will reap from being authentic and open will open so many doors.



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