

TRANSCRIPT

**BTU #64:
ANTHONY GARCIA**

ARMY TO FOUNDER OF GUIDE-ON, AN ESSENTIAL VETERAN RESOURCE



BEYOND *the* **UNIFORM**

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Background

Beyond the Uniform

Members of the Armed Forces take an oath to put the needs of the nation before their own. Whether they serve five years or fifty, these men and women eventually face a transition to a civilian career and life. Beyond the Uniform is dedicated to providing the resources necessary to navigate this transition with confidence.

We do this by:

- Showcasing examples of veterans who have successfully made this transition, what they learned, what they wish they knew, and what advice they'd offer
- Analyzing data to spot trends in career decisions
- Illuminating ways in which military training is an extreme advantage in the civilian sector

Thank you to all of those who have and who continue to serve our country. Countless Americans have benefited from your service, and it is my hope that the information provide can benefit from the sacrifices you have made.

Justin M. Nassiri

Justin is the Host of Beyond the Uniform. He started out at the U.S. Naval Academy, after which he served for five years as an Officer onboard nuclear submarines. After his transition from the Navy, Justin received his MBA from the Stanford Graduate School of Business. After Stanford, Justin founded the marketing software company, StoryBox, and raised \$3M in funding from venture capital investors.



TRANSCRIPT



Justin Nassiri: Welcome back to 'Beyond the Uniform'. I'm Justin Nassiri and each week I interview military veterans about their civilian career. Today is episode number 64 with Anthony Garcia.

Anthony Garcia: Me and Derrick went in there. We pitched to Mike for an hour. 9:00 AM, the next morning, we got a term sheet and we were about to die. We were running out of money. We ended up pitching to Mike on September 10th and we got a term sheet on September 11th. That's weird, too. If you're not used to taking risk, you're gonna have a hard time succeeding as an entrepreneur. I'm \$240,000 in debt. My credit sucks. I lived with my co-founder for three years and we're both in our mid to late 30s at the time. I've given up going to weddings. I gave up skiing for six years. I gave up surfing for six years, given up love. The list goes on and on. The sacrifice...

JN: Normally, I give the top reasons to listen to today's episode, and I'll do that in just a second, but I wanted to give a bit more context first. This episode was slated to be released two months from now. You'll notice the episode number is way out of sequence and that's messing up my OCD tendencies. But I just spoke to Anthony and wanted to get this out right away.

JN: I have met very few people like Anthony before, not on the 64 interviews I've done to this point or in the 36 years I've got under my belt. From minute one of my conversation with Anthony, I realized that he was fully and completely showing up for this interview, being authentic and taking risks in a way that made me think, "Shoot, I gotta seriously up my game for this." And I have a feeling that Anthony has that impact on a lot of people, that he challenges them to seriously up their game. If that's not enough reason to listen, here's my top three reasons to listen to today's show. Number one, authenticity. Anthony talks about his personal struggle with PTSD in a way that is very powerful. He talks about his passion to help veterans and you feel it. He talks about the failures and the way they helped him get where he is today.

SHOW NOTES: <http://beyondtheuniform.io/btu-64-anthony-garcia-army-to-founder-of-guide-on-an-essential-veteran-resource/>

JN: Before we started recording, he talked about the success his company is experiencing right now and how grateful he is for it and that he's not going to take it for granted. He's going to make it count. His authenticity and openness are admirable. Number two, transition. Anthony's company, GuideOn, is a resource that every veteran should check out. In nearly every interview I've had so far, veterans talk about the difficulty they have in knowing what they wanna do and translate in their military experience into civilian terms. That's one of the major reasons I'm doing this show. Anthony's company obliterates this problem and he's also got a lot of great advice for vets about their transition. Number three, start ups. Anthony's story of entrepreneurship is really inspiring. He's raised money from one of the best investors in the world, and I know he and his team are going to have a big impact on the veteran community and the world. As always, at beyondtheuniform.io, you can sign up for our newsletter, listen to other episodes, see a directory of resources for veterans and see the show notes for today's episode, where you'll find links to all the resources Anthony mentions and timestamps to the different topics we cover in this interview.

JN: And with that, let's dive in to my interview with Anthony Garcia. Alright. Well, joining me today in Oakland, California is Anthony Garcia. Anthony, welcome to 'Beyond the Uniform'.

AG: Yeah, no. Thanks for having me, Justin. I'm really excited about this.

JN: So I wanted to give listeners just a quick background on you. Anthony is the CEO and co-founder at GuideOn. It's a military veteran talent acquisition platform that I'm sure we'll talk about a lot during the interview. He started out back at St. Mary's University. After which, he served in the army for eight years as a Medical Service Corps officer and medical evacuation pilot. After transitioning out of the army, he received his MBA at Cornell University. And since then, he's worked as a general manager at SRI international and the CEO and co-founder of Adjacent Applications. He started GuideOn in the late 2014

and he's raised funding for Mike Maples' VC firm called Floodgate, and that's one of the most respected investors in Silicon Valley. So Anthony, to start things off, take us back to that moment when you decided to leave the army. How did you approach that decision?

AG: Yeah. So the way that I approached that, I was kinda forced into that decision. So, I was finishing up my second tour in Iraq. It was around September-October timeframe. We ended up getting back late November down to Kuwait. But around October or September, the army told me that I was gonna be a Medical Service Corps instructor at the officer basic course down in San Antonio, Texas. And for your listeners, that's the home for military medicine now, as of recent. It's a great honor to instruct anybody in the military. It's one of the most difficult jobs in the world, I think, outside of combat, but I wasn't really excited about it because I was being removed from the line, finishing up my second tour as a Dustoff aviator, leading a 100 men and women into combat and, which was the most rewarding experience that I've ever had. And I really wasn't fired up about this new opportunity, even though I knew it was a step in the right direction for my military career.

AG: Fast-forward February, now I'm living in San Antonio, my sister decided that she was gonna move back from Oklahoma. She worked at University of Oklahoma at the time, and she just had this inkling thought that she needed to be closer to her brother. I don't know what gave her that thought, but I'm grateful that she had it because we ended up living together. I bought a home in San Antonio. We're roommates and when I first started instructing, I was not happy at all. I wanted to try to get out of that situation. I talked to my boss. He was in the process of having me rerouted to Afghanistan. They actually found a unit, that I could perform duties as an operations officer. So I was really excited about that, but between April, when I asked them to do that, and February, I was pretty much self-medicating myself, I was drunk all the time.

AG: You're on the platform in the school house from... Your day starts at PT, which is 5:30, 6 o'clock. My day would end at 10:00. And then I would start drinking and I would drink till I pass out or whatever. And then when I was in the field, my day would start... I'd wake up at 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning, and then I would get back at 10:00 at night, and I would pick up a six pack or whatever. And I just pretty much spent every moment outside of the uniform drunk. And I wasn't able to talk about my experiences unless I was drunk and that usually ended up in a lot of crying and maybe breaking some stuff every now and then.

AG: And my sister, after seeing that for a couple of months, she's like, "Hey, we can't do anything for you." My parents, they live in San Antonio, and they were like, "We can't do anything for you, you need to get help because this is scaring me." And I remember looking at her, seeing this fear that like, "Man, I need to get help because my sister is deathly afraid here." I ended up talking to a psychologist the next day, this was 2006. So at the time, it really wasn't that accepted as normal now to talk to somebody. So I started talking to somebody and I remember going to the psychologist that first day, and I'm like, "What's this person gonna do for me?" And 10 minutes into it, I'm crying sober for the first time and talking about some stuff that I started to process. And my, I guess, PTSD is more or less... At the time it was, "Why am I still alive when I got friends that aren't? Why did I push my soldiers so hard to the point where I felt like I was personally responsible for burning them out?" So there was a lot of that going on.

AG: So during that process, I started asking myself, because what I learned from psychology is they don't give you the answers, you figure them out yourself, is "Man, I'm 28, why don't I think about doing something else? Man, I did this awesome job in the military that I'll never be able to do again just because I started to consciously think about, "Will I ever be able to have that feeling again?" And the answer was no 'cause I was moving up in rank. And so after talking to the psychologist a few times, I started talking with her, "Well, what

else could I do?" And we talked about that and left that last session, talked to a couple of friends, talked to my dad, and he was like, "Why don't you get an MBA, you wanna... I think that's the type of person you are. I think you wanna be a leader in business." That's what his gut was telling him.

AG: And from that point on, I was like, "Yeah, let me do that. If I'm gonna leave the military where I'm in charge of some crazy stuff and leading and working with some amazing men and women, I'd like to do something similar in the private sector." And the way about doing that for me was to get that MBA, to ensure that I would come in at that level. You know what? What's interesting is when I went back to business school, I was 30-years-old and my peers were 26 and 25 which was another... That's another weird story there.

AG: But in my mind, I was thinking, "Okay, in order for me to catch up to what I considered my peer group, somebody my age in the private sector, I think this MBA will help me." So I applied to some business schools, didn't really realize what the criteria was on the GMAT, some other stuff. I took the GMAT one time, I'm not ashamed to say that I got a 510 on it, which is average, but it's not good enough to get into some of the schools that I applied to, and Cornell wait-listed me, and then they took a bet on me and I'm grateful for that bet. Sometimes, not having a choice is the best thing, and I ended up going to business school at Cornell.

JN: Man, I really appreciate first of all just your candor about your struggle with PTSD and just... It's incredible to hear that your courage and diving in and tackling that. And then it's also really compelling to see that... Who knows if you would be where you're at without that? Not just psychologically, but from a career standpoint of the self-knowledge and discovery process that came about from this. And I was surprised to hear that your father brought up business school, 'cause looking at your background, I just assumed you were doing a stint

in the military and you were always gung-ho on either business or on starting your own thing. And it sounds like that was kind of a later realization that that wasn't this early destination that you had plotted out.

AG: No. So I went in in '99, and at the time, my dad was a retired lieutenant colonel, he did 21 years. He was branch detailed at field artillery and then went AG. And so for me, I think the natural thing to do was go into the military, 'cause it's kind of a family business for a lot of people that grew up in that environment. I was born in Germany, moved around a bunch. We ended up at Fort Sam Houston, where my dad finished his career, and it was just ingrained in me, not that he forced it upon me, but I was like, "Hey, I gotta serve my country 'cause that's what you do. That's just what you do." And number two, man, I love the military culture. I love the army culture and I didn't wanna let go of that, so when I went in, I was... My goal was to be a company commander in the old Medevac system, which was a major in... To stay until lieutenant colonel. I'd be lieutenant colonel now if I would've stayed in, but man, that's what I wanted to do. And up until talking to that psychologist, that's what I thought I was gonna do. What's funny is I didn't go into the military wanting to fly. I went into the military wanting to serve, and I got picked up for Medical Service Corps, and then somebody said, "Hey, you can fly helicopters."

AG: And I said, "Well, that sounds cool, but I've never really wanted to do that." And he talked to me about it some more. It was one of my cadre in ROTC. And at the end of the day, we got done with this PT session which, this discussion happened during a run. And we're graduating a week from then. All my finals are done. I go back to my room. I have a couple of beers with my roommate and my best friend Carl, who's a military intelligence officer. And it was pretty much a drunk decision to fill out the application because a lot of people are gonna be like, "Man, this guy." It really came down to looking cool in a flight suit and maybe making it easier for me to talk to women or something.

JN: I think on the pie chart of why people become pilots, that's probably the overwhelming majority is. [chuckle] You're just honest about it. What about... Especially for veterans listening, whether they're active duty or they're just out, what's your thought on business school? It sounds like you were pretty pro-business school going into that, knowing now that you've gone on to starting your own company, is that... Would you recommend that path to veterans? Do you think it's not as necessary, or is it an essential component?

AG: So, I would say when I got out of the military, I think it was an essential component, because this world that I operate in now was so foreign to just anybody. Forget a veteran, it was just like, "How do you do this? What's involved?" And for myself personally, I told my... I discovered that I wanted to be an entrepreneur two months before I graduated business school. So when I went to business school, it was like, "Well, I'm gonna reinvent myself. I'll figure out what I'm gonna do." I got a full-time offer doing merger and acquisition work at a Fortune 50 organization. I turned that down because I didn't wanna do M&A stuff. I didn't wanna sit behind a computer and mess around with spreadsheets. I knew that I wanted to be more of an operations general manager type of person leading people, working with people. So, I turned down that opportunity and I ended up discovering that I wanted to be an entrepreneur a few months later. But having the degree, and at the time when I moved out to Silicon Valley, I think having that degree and that understanding and that foundation of business, I think it set me up for success, because there wasn't the content online. And there weren't the thought leaders on LinkedIn that you could reach out to.

AG: And there weren't these boot camps and all this other stuff. It was just like, "Hey," essentially, I'm not gonna say that I was a pioneer, but I would argue that, I've been doing this since 2010. The internet is only less than 30 years old. A lot of these entrepreneurs that came out of the dot-com era, they failed, but then they were successful five to 10 years afterwards. Mobile became big when we

started our first business, so there wasn't a playbook involved. So now to answer your question, for a veteran who's coming out of the military now, you don't need business school in order to be an entrepreneur. I would say go to business school if you wanna learn the science of business, but it's mutually exclusive. You could go to any entrepreneur route. There's plenty of information online. You can reach out and talk to professionals like you and me, and you can get an idea of, maybe what direction you wanna head. I think location is also important. That's some other stuff that I can talk about. But it's just... I don't think it's necessary. I think it's only necessary if, depending on the depth of understanding of business that you wanna have before becoming an entrepreneur.

AG: Because really, a lot of the stuff that I've learned over the past six years of doing this, I didn't learn in business school. Now, a lot of business schools teach it, but I still don't think it's necessary. But for me, it worked out the way that it did, and I'm glad the way that it did. What I will say, though, is the network that I acquired from Cornell has paid huge dividends. In fact, the way that we raised our initial round through Floodgate was through an introduction from John Zimmer, the co-founder and president of Lyft, who's a Cornellian. And when we were running out of money in April of 2015, I reached out to John, and I told him, "Hey, man, I don't know you, you don't know me, but we both went to Cornell, and I'm a veteran, and here's my story." And he read the email, surprisingly enough.

AG: And he got back to me the next day and he said, "I wanna help you, because my grandfather is a World War II veteran, and he had this problem, too." And five days later, I'm talking to the co-founder and president of Lyft, and he's like, "I did diligence on you guys from that email. I researched everything you put in there, and it's all accurate, and the people that I talked to said that I need to help you." At that time, we had pitched to Andreessen Horowitz. We had talked to Trinity Ventures. And I put that all in the email, and he talked to all of those professionals, and they said, "Hey, help this company." And he helped us. He got

us to a point where we were polished up enough to talk to Mike. He didn't even give us a calling card to talk to Mike. It was just, "Hey Mike, here's something interesting. They're helping veterans. I think you should talk to this company." Me and Eric went in there, we pitched to Mike for an hour. 9:00 AM the next morning, we got a term sheet. And we were about to die. We were running out of... We were running out of money. We reached out to John in April. We ended up pitching to Mike on September 10th and we got a term sheet on September 11th. That's kind of weird, too. But, yeah, that's... The MBA program gave me a network that I never thought existed. So there's a couple of things at play.

AG: It's like if you've got a great network coming out of the military, you're not gonna need that MBA. If you don't have a great network, that MBA could help you, but you could also create that network a year or two before leaving the military, and that's something that GuideOn, in my organization's trying to educate and assist people with. But, yeah, I guess, to answer your question, you don't need that MBA, but it helped me.

JN: Well, let's... There is so much about your background I want to dive into, but let's fast forward to GuideOn. First, how would you explain GuideOn for someone listening who's not familiar with you?

AG: Yeah. So, what GuideOn essentially does is we translate every job title, every job description that you would hold throughout your military career into private sector terminology that's transferable and, more importantly, understood by a recruiter, hiring manager, and anybody that you could pick up off the street. We don't... What we do that's different than other transformation translation tools out there is we don't take an aggregate of you, we take every individual job title that you held the same way that you would in the private sector, and we just make that something that's understood. But we we go a step further and we extrapolate every skill associated with that job. Hard, soft, and

technical. And we map those skills to private sector skills. And then we take the aggregate all your skills and the level of those skills and then we mash those to private sector opportunities. So, it's not that I'm an infantry officer and I have to be a cop. No. It's, "I was an infantry officer. I was an infantry non-commissioned officer and I can work in sales. I could work in business development," because let's face it. That's what they're doing when they're out there in the field and in the combat zone. They're winning hearts and minds of tribal leaders.

AG: That's the most intense business development strategic alliance activity you can be engaged in. It's just they, we don't understand what we're doing at the time. We translate that and we've proved that and we show that to employers. So what we do is we provide that and then we also unlock the imagination of what's possible for the veteran. So when I got out of the military, I had no idea what I was capable of doing. I had no idea what I wanted to do because I just didn't have the imagination to know what was available and to dream and to say, "Man, I could do this. I could do that." So that's kind of the intrinsic value of GuideOn as well.

AG: But at the end of the day, it's to translate that experience into match veterans to the appropriate jobs and not to try to pigeonhole them or force them into an opportunity that they're not suited to fill or are not capable. Case in point, what we do with employers, we have to educate them that not all captains and not all non-commissioned officers are created equal. When I was working in the military, I worked at the direct level. So I was a line officer. I was where the rubber meets the road. I was highly technical. I was highly very good with communication.

AG: But my conceptualization, my strategy wasn't being utilized the way that it was for my buddy, Carl, who was a military intelligence officer, who was working at that strategic core level, which is the equivalent to the enterprise, the

strategy level of an organization where I was equivalent to the operations. So think of General Mills. They have these plants. I would be perfectly suited to be a line manager or a general manager of operations at a plant. I would be... I would not be set up for success to work at the enterprise level doing strategy, doing business development. Carl would, and in turn, he would not be suited to work at the the direct level, the line level, as a plant manager because he doesn't have that experience. But when it comes to strategy and business development, he's perfectly suited for that. So that's another nuance that employers aren't familiar with and so we also educate them in that regard, too.

JN: I love it. It's in so many of these interviews that those are some of the biggest pain points. As one, how do I explain my background? And then two, how do I know what to do? And you guys are tackling those in a very innovative way. Where... Can you pinpoint the moment when you first had this idea? When was this born in your mind?

AG: So the idea was born in my mind... Officially, I would say about three years ago with my co-founder, Derek Artz. He's our CEO and Derek's never served in the military. He worked alongside military service members for several years. And one thing that I wanna point out is when you look at our organization, if you go to the 'About' page, number one, we physically look like the military. We're very diverse. But then, we're also not all civilians and we're not also all veterans. The only way this problem is gonna be solved is if you bring the two together both in the science, the development, the engineering, as well as the business side. So there's that component. And I think it's important to point that out because it wasn't just me coming up with this, it was me and Derek talking about, "Man, there's got to be a way to solve this employment problem." And so we started that discussion, I would say towards the end of our first business. And then we pivoted into a second business and we knew that that was gonna fail. So we failed fast. That was the one thing that we learned is like, "Let's get this out. No, it's not working. We're shutting it down."

AG: And then we said, "Hey, we talked about helping veterans find jobs. Well, we got a little bit money left, we got a bad ass team, an amazing team, great developers, great designers, great professionals. Let's try to bite off something that we might not be able to chew, but I think we can." So, we said, "Yeah, let's try to help veterans find jobs." Now, where the idea came from was when I went to business school, my dad said, "Hey, give me your officer evaluation reports," and he made me a resume from that. When I completed business school, I started making resumes for all my military buddies the same way that he did. So Mark who's one of our co-workers, he does government and PR and business development for us. I helped him with his resume that way. I helped my buddy, Joe, who's a consultant with GuideOn who works at a major Fortune 100 Company, and about a dozen other people that way. So what we said around September of 2014 was, "There's gotta be a way that we can scale up that method of creating that resume with OERs, NCOERs, and FITREPs. What does that weigh?" And with some really smart people, to include our chief information officer, who's my father, and I can talk a little about him later.

AG: He's actually probably one of the handful of people that can do that because of his military and profession in his private-sector background. We figured out how to do that for the 11 out, the infantry officer. He actually built that first bicycle in December. And then we figured out how to create several bicycles in rapid succession by assembly lining certain things technically. And by the end of November of last year, we translated every combat arms service member and any combat arms service member in the army could get an instant resume. And by the end of this year, any service member Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine, and Coast Guard will be able to get one. So the idea came from taking FITREPs, OERs and then creating a resume, and so that's what we've basically done, we've automated that.

JN: Right before we started recording, you and I were just talking about failure, and I think we share this perspective of all the good stuff comes out of failure. All the successes are born out of these moments of failure. And I know we don't have enough time to distill all of your experience in the military and GuideOn.

And I would love to be able to go through each step, but I'm wondering, what were some of the failures along the way that you think really helped you to be where you're at right now?

AG: Yeah. So I think the first failure was our first business for sure. When we went about creating that first business, mobile was brand new and we felt like we needed to be on that wave right away. Looking back, we should have created just a web-based app because mobile was just too new. But we decided that we're gonna create a native iOS app, and it was for a military marketplace to help military service members and their families buy and sell goods when they PCS.

AG: We launched that in Monterey, California. We sold over \$450,000 worth of goods. We had over 50% of that demographic using the application. All the metrics were amazing but the problem was is the market wasn't right. And it wasn't that the military market wasn't right. It wasn't the investment world wasn't educated to the fact that the military demographic, the service member, number one, could be serviced at scale, but number two, yield large amounts of capital. Because at the end of the day, investors are not gonna invest, unless you're gonna make a lot of money, but they just view the military market being that big. I can tell you it's in the billions of dollars. We believed that, we've always believed that, but the investment market didn't start believing that until 2016, the end of 2015, maybe early 2015.

AG: So what we learned from that experience was what the market is demanding and what the market is talking about is everything. You can build an amazing product and have awesome technology, but if it's not right for the market, well, it's just gonna die on the line. So there was that. The second business, like I told you, we failed fast there. We built a Quora type venue for military service members to ask and answer questions and solve problems. What

we realized shortly after launching that product was we weren't gonna get people off Facebook, so we said, "This ain't gonna work so we're gonna put it down." We put two months of effort into it, which was probably the equivalent of \$300,000 and it was a sunk cost. "This is not gonna work, our gut's telling us. Let's not try to make this work." And I would say those two experiences definitely hardened the grit that we already had, which told us that we needed to try one more time. I think the biggest thing that I've learned from this experience was, or so far has been this lifestyle is habitual in the sense that if you're not used to taking risk, you're gonna have a hard time succeeding as an entrepreneur. If you're not conditioned to taking risk, it's not gonna work out. It's never gonna work out.

AG: I've got several business school friends who talk about starting a business. But I turn to them and say, "Well, I'm \$240,000 in debt. My credit sucks. I lived with my co-founder for three years and we're both... We're in our mid to late 30s at the time. I've given up going to weddings. I gave up skiing for six years. I gave up surfing for six years. I've given up love." The list goes on and on, the sacrifice. And it's just you gotta be ready to weather some long lows because the lows are low and long and the highs are short and high. But, I would say from those failures, they made us tougher, I guess.

AG: And I don't think that if I wouldn't have failed in those two businesses, I would not be here right now. And failures, it's defined... It's relative to the... The definition is relative, I guess, because I look back at the early days of GuideOn and we almost raised \$2.5 million right away. And I think if we would have raised that capital at the time that we would have raised it, I think we'd be out of business right now because I think we would have gotten lazy. I think we would have maybe taken some undo risk that was unnecessary. I think we would have not stayed as focused as we should have. Focus is so important when starting a business.

AG: You can only solve one problem and you got... Mike Maples always says, "You got one photon torpedo to shoot at the Death Star," and that's what that

startup's building. They can only do one castle run. And if you don't hit that target, the company is more than likely gonna die 90% of the time. So, you gotta really stay focused on doing that. The other thing is you have to be extremely passionate about the problem that you're solving because if you're in this game to try to make money, it's never gonna work and we've always been truly passionate about the military, demographic, the veteran, the family member, the service member, the military brat. That's been our total focus. We're all passionate about this. You can talk to Eric who's our lead engineer and who's never served in his life, or Tee who's our head of product, head of design, who's a Thai national. And everybody is equally as passionate about solving this problem. So, you gotta be passionate about the problem if you want an even opportunity to solving it.

JN: And how does it work for a veteran? So if they wanna work with you, what does that process look like?

AG: So right now, if a veteran requires a resume, they can go to www.guide-on.com and they can create a resume instantly. Right now, our current play is just provide a free resume to the veteran. That's all we're doing. Towards the end of 2017, we're gonna get into candidate placement. So any person who has created a resume with GuideOn, we're gonna have that database and we're gonna be able to start matching them to companies that we've partnered with. So my gut's telling me, by the end of 2017, we'll probably have 10 customers, 10 large enterprise companies that are looking to hire veterans by the thousands. So although right now you're not gonna get... You wanna have an initial job opportunity through GuideOn by creating a resume. By the end of 2017, there's gonna be plenty of opportunities to find plenty of career opportunities that are utilizing our platform.

JN: And it's free, it's completely free?

AG: Yeah, it's completely. The only thing that we require are the standard document that any other company will ask to prove that you're a veteran. Moving forward in the future, we're gonna ask for OERs, NCOERs and FITREPs. That's never gonna be required, but what that will allow is that veteran a better opportunity of getting hired, because what the private sector doesn't have is they don't have a uniform system of evaluating their coworkers or their workers. The military has that and we're gonna be able to provide a little bit more fidelity on what that service member looks like as far as their successes in the military. So it's gonna evolve over time. There's gonna be machine learning and all that other stuff that any big data company does, but right now, you can go and you can get a free resume and it won't cost you anything.

JN: That's great. It seems like that's a no-brainer for anyone even if you're already out of the military just to get that going. And I'm curious if in the years you've been doing this, if you've seen any common mistakes that veterans make in that transition to their first job or just anything related to that might benefit veterans about their career search or anything related to that.

AG: Yeah, I would say the biggest pitfall is the pitfall that I suffered from as well and that is you gotta start shifting your mind, I would say a year out of leaving service that you probably are holding the best job and working for the best company you will ever work for. And the reason why I say that is because the values that we live by, they're uniform across the entire military. Nothing will energize you and get you moving harder than knowing that the person to your left, to your right is relying on you for safety. Whether that's in peace time or combat, the military, your training, training is dangerous, and you know that you're serving your country. Those, all that combined, that's very powerful.

AG: So what I'm saying is you're not gonna find the professional fulfillment that you will in the private sector that you did in the military. So that's not to say that you won't ever get to something close to that. But, me here right now, I'm

having the time of my life. I feel so blessed and so fortunate that I got the team working with me, and we've got this amazing investor and that we're starting to sell. And I'm excited everyday and I'm pumped. But it's still not as powerful and as profound as my military experience. And so, I guess, the picture that I'm painting is like, "I feel that I'm pretty close to getting there, but I know that I never will."

AG: So, I think if you can start telling yourself prior leaving the military that, "Hey man, I'm loving my job," or maybe, "I'm hating my military job," you're gonna leave, and you're gonna look back, you're gonna say, "Man, that was awesome because I knew that if I told somebody else I was gonna do this, I was gonna do it. And they knew that I was gonna do it." If you get into the private sector, it's not so black and white. And if somebody says they're gonna get back to you, and they don't get back to you on a certain date, it's not that they're a dirt bag. It's just that they weren't raised the same way we were. So what I'm getting at is you see service members leaving the military, entering their first job and the job maybe a good fit, but what they get frustrated with is the culture. And the culture could be a good fit, too. But if somebody told you they're gonna do something and they didn't do it, it doesn't mean that they're a dirt bag. It doesn't mean that they would be doing push-ups in the military for punishment. People got stuff going on and it's just different. And I think if you can wrap your mind around that, there's gonna be learning curve for that as well. I think that most of us would be set up for success better.

AG: The other thing is, yeah, you may have led all these people and did all this awesome stuff, but the private sector is in the military, you do different things. You're not gonna leave the military as a Sergeant First Class and come out and be like a senior manager, you'll probably be a manager. You're not gonna come out as a lieutenant colonel and be a director or a VP. You're probably gonna start off as a senior manager or maybe a junior director. And you're not gonna be making the money that you were making. One thing that I don't think we

consider before we leave the military is that, yeah, you're getting your base pay, you're getting a housing allowance, you've got free medical, you've got free dental, and you might be getting COLA. Basically, all that adds up to a salary in the private sector. So in the private sector, you're not gonna get BAH. You're not gonna get COLA. Your salary will be adjusted depending on if you're in the Bay Area or if you're in Alabama. Yeah, there's cost of living differences. But, you're gonna go for making... Chances are if you get out as a lieutenant colonel, you're probably... Look, you're gonna be fortunate to find a job that makes about 80 to 90K.

AG: Now, the thing that you need to realize and know is that what we're really good at doing is proving ourselves and our promotions are exponential. So be happy with your first job. Tell yourself and set expectations, and just know that you'll move up fast if you just be patient.

JN: That's great. And given that you raise money from one of the best investors in the world, what advice do you have for veterans about the fundraising process, or what have you learned that you would wanna pass on?

AG: So everybody knows success isn't linear. It's messy. We've been making sausage for a long time now. And I say that because the way... Creativity is not a pretty defined sexy thing. It's really dirty. It's really messy and so is fundraising. I could talk about the type of investor that you need to find, and how they need to fit your culture, and all that stuff. But I think what it comes down to really is you got to have a good product. You got to have a good product. And if you're not making money, you have to have a technology. And when we pitched to Mike, we had a technology that does not exist in the private sector or the military. There are private sector applications definitely to what we're building. So, we had an amazing technology. It was novelly unique. The market was right. People are talking about veterans getting hired. We had an amazing team. Our

team has gotten even more amazing. Yeah, it's kind of a combination of a lot of things, I would say team, timing, the market, what the market's saying, what the market wants, a novel unique technology that's protectable.

AG: If you got those four things, you're ready to start talking to investors. And obviously, if you got revenue, that's even better. Nobody is gonna give you money for an idea that is dead. That happened when I first started this rat race. You might get money if you've got a track record. So after GuideOn was wildly successful, I know it will be easy for me or simple, it will be simple for me to raise money. So if you've got a track record, yeah, but nobody's gonna give you capital for an idea. They're going to see those four criteria for the most part.

AG: And I would say that you know grit has to be a part of your DNA, that's a definite, but you gotta be a good person, too. Every person that I've met who I wanna be like one day, man, they're all just good people. I consider myself a good person, too. But you meet a lot of really slimy people in this business, too. And those individuals in my mind aren't as successful as they could be, but all the good people that we've surrounded ourselves with have introduced us to other good people. And I can't say enough about John at Lyft. That guy, he's an amazing professional, amazing person. He's been there for worst when we've been in some really tough situations.

AG: I.e. When you're closing a funding round, it takes a few months and we ran out of money and he helped us out with that real quick. And just being able to pick up the phone and call somebody and say, "Hey, I need some help." "Okay, what's this help? What is required? Okay, cool. Don't worry, you'll have it." Mike the same way, he's just a really, really good person. So, I think, yeah, make sure you got a great technology, great team, the timing and the market is right. Make sure that you've got a track record of some sort but also just be a good person. I really think that is probably the biggest part of being successful. I know it sounds kinda cliché, but man, it's so real.

JN: And you mentioned that you work with your... That your father is your chief information officer. What's that like working with your dad and having him be a part of your organization?

AG: Yeah. So it's funny because when we first started down this path... So my dad's got a PhD. He's an organizational developer behavioral scientist. When he was in the army, the army realized in the early '80s, late '70s that the leadership management structure was all screwed up, because after the Vietnam War, a lot of awesome people got out, a lot of not-so-awesome people stayed in, things got messed up. And so the army sent not many professionals through an organizational effectiveness program down in Monterey, California. And Monterey is, if your listeners are familiar, it's kind of the home of change transformation, new leadership development, OD work, all that stuff that used to be known as kinda touchy, feely, soft stuff. TED came out of Monterey. And so the military, the army specifically sent all these handful of these great officers and NCOs that just got their behavioral science degree, Master's, through this program, and then they deployed them throughout the military at the core level and they just, basically, cleaned house. They were the equivalent of the McKinsey, Bain, Deloitte consultant of today, fixing large enterprise organizations and solving problems and helping leaders become better leaders.

AG: So he had that experience. He went into the private sector. He was a Director of Human Resources for HEB Grocery. Then he was a senior consultant for HEB, he re-orged HEB. He was the director of dairy operations. Then he went to Harland Clarke, did something similar at Harland Clarke and then said, "Hey, I should get my PhD and just do this for myself." Started a small consultancy, servicing small and medium size businesses. And so when I came to him with this problem we're gonna solve very earlier on, I said, "Hey, we're gonna create this resume," and he was like, "That's not it only. It's the skills problem." And he was talking about the skills gap before the nation started talking about the skills gap. And so I talked to him for like what was supposed to be 10 minutes, it turned out to be two hours and I was like, "I need you to talk to Derrick."

AG: He talked to Derrick and then I was like, "Hey, do you wanna do this? Do you wanna be a part of this?" He's 63 at the time. And he's semi-retired, playing golf and still consulting, and he's like, "Well, I thought you would never ask."

[chuckle]

AG: And he jumped headfirst into this. Talk about a guy who... He knows how to use every type of software product that we use out there. I'm just so proud of him because it goes to show you can teach an old dog new tricks. He knows how to use every every Google app that we use, Slack, name what we're using, he's working very intimately with our products, our design team, our development team. Him and his team have translated, basically, everything under the sun to the military. We've been to the White House a couple times. They've vetted our technology. They say that we're the Rosetta Stone for better and transition. Glassdoor gives us mad props. In fact, we got a special relationship with them. LinkedIn has passed this on to people. There's a lot of cool stuff going on right now, thanks to that guy, for sure.

JN: I'm so jealous, man, 'cause in starting the company, I feel like I've gotten to know my father in a different way. He's a CPA and CFO by training, and so being able to ask him questions about business like we've had, it's just a different facet of our relationship, and it's given us a different way to bond, and your ability to work with him. I think this is so rad. That would be so cool.

AG: It's funny, because when he started working, I was like, "Hey, I'm gonna have to call you by your first name." And he was like, "Hey, I wouldn't have it any other way." So some more disclosure. My sister is a behavioral scientist who is probably one of the best out there. She's part of this organization too, so they work on the same team. And so me and Kristen are calling... We call our dad, Tony Sr. And everybody else calls him Tony Sr or Senior, and it works out good. There's nothing but professionalism, but at the same time though, if you were to walk into our organization, the culture is like a family. We got 13 full-time people, it's like being deployed. It is the closest thing to being deployed to a combat zone, but knowing that nobody's gonna die and all that other good stuff. So, yeah, no.

It's cool.

JN: That's great man. Well, I know we are... And I know that trust is such a crucial component of working, and so I just feel like, man, you trust family, so that's an awesome thing to have them as part of the organization. I know we're short on time. I wanted to make sure I gave you room just to kind of any final words of wisdom. It could be about personal life, professional life, or anything, but knowing that you've got an audience of active duty and veterans listening, what else would you want them to know?

AG: Yeah. So, I'll do a shameless plug real quick for another product that we pushed out on Veteran's Day, it's called LINE1, line1.org. LINE, L-I-N-E, letter 1.org. And the name is derived from the 9-line Medevac. That's where I come from, and Mark, he's also a former Dustoff guy too, and he's part of our team. But we call it LINE1 because LINE1 is location. Typically, you're fortunate if you can get a eight digit grid, you get a Medevac request. We'll settle for six, six is good enough. But the idea is we've built this venue for veterans, non-veterans, corporations, the best VSOs, thought leaders to come together to help veterans transition. We launched it on Veteran's Day, we've got a lot of users, lot of contributors. It's growing well, and it's... We set it up to be a dot org, because we believe that we want anybody to be a part of this. We want even our competitors to join this because, at the end of the day, we wanna help the veterans. So for the listeners out there, check that out. If you got a question about transitioning, you're gonna get a great answer from somebody out there. And some of the best answers you're gonna get are from somebody who never served.

AG: I guess, what I would like to say, and I guess, to sum up this discussion that you've been very graciously having with me is when you get out of the military, and when you get done with your experience, and if you've had a combat experience... I'm gonna do my best not to get emotional here, but it's like a journey, man, afterwards. It's... I think about my experience every day. I think about the good, I think about the bad. I miss it. But, I would say that, "Don't be

afraid to get help. If you think you need to talk to somebody, then you need to talk to somebody. If somebody tells you you need to talk to somebody, you need to talk to somebody." Don't be afraid of taking medication, if you think it'll help. I took Prozac for eight months, and it helped. Pick up the phone and call your buddies. I live in San Francisco, there are many veterans out there, I picked up the phone and talk to about three veteran buddies every week, because I have to be reminded that I'm not crazy and that I have those experiences. Yeah. And I think that... I think if we keep doing that, we're gonna be better off after service, and we're gonna prove to the world that we're the most amazing professionals that need to be hired. Because it's not that we're better than anybody, but we deserve and we've reserved, I believe a position along the economic hiring spectrum based off what we did.

AG: We've proved that we can hold on a job. We've proved that we're highly trainable. We've proved that we're gonna show up to work on time. We've proved that we can work in teams, and there are not many people out there that have ever proved that. And so know that you have that skill set, your leadership and your management skills are durable. Those will never go away. Those are gonna last until you die. And there are people who would pay so much money to have those in the private sector. So, I guess, what I'm saying is take care of your body, take care of your mind, and just believe in yourself, and keep moving forward, and you're gonna find your next opportunity in the private sector. And it's a journey, man. You're gonna have some highs and some lows with thinking about how life used to be, but man, just make sure you celebrate that with your buddies in the private sector. There's a lot of veterans out there, just pick up the phone and call a buddy, and let's just take care of each other. That's all I got, man.

[chuckle]

JN: Ah, man, Anthony you are a rockstar, dude. I just appreciate just the commitment to just authenticity, and I just respect the man that you are to speak candidly about your experience and we could've filled this hour with

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so honorable that you were willing to open up about the struggles, and the challenges and things that I know you are not alone on and will help so many veterans. And then on top of that, the way that you've built this organization, that it's just... I think you guys are gonna have such a big impact on the veteran community. I think this is gonna be so good for the economy at large, but just for so many men and women that are deserving of just that extra nudge and that extra help to help them find where they can thrive on the other side. And so I appreciate the way in which you're this role model for that, and then also you're just a power house of just steamrolling to make a difference. So for listeners, I'll put links to guide-on.com, line1.org, all the references that Anthony mentioned in this. But definitely check them out, and this is awesome. So thank you for your time on this, Anthony

AG: Yeah, no, thank you, Justin. I really appreciate your time, and I love what you're doing for veterans, man. I'm excited to see what evolves from this.

JN: Thanks for listening. As we wrap up, I wanted to share three quick but important announcements. First of all if you haven't already, please sign up for my newsletter at beyondtheuniform.io. Although I publish on LinkedIn and Facebook, I'll be starting to use the newsletter as my primary means to share new articles, episodes, and resources relevant to the veteran community. Second, I would love to hear from you. Sometimes, I feel like I'm in a relationship where I do all of the talking. You can view me as your very own dedicated resource to help you and other veterans in your civilian career. Have feedback on what I can do differently? Let me know. Someone in particular you want me to track down for an interview? I'm all ears. Know of another way that I could help the veteran community? I'm dying to know. You can find me on LinkedIn, comment on any post at beyondtheuniform.io, email me at justin@beyondtheuniform.io, or if you're into the Intel industry, I'm sure you can track me down in some super creepy way. However you do it, take me up on it, I thrive on feedback. Lastly, a quick plug for a few resources I think would benefit any veteran. American Corporate Partners and Service to School both provide free assistance to any veteran.

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JN: American Corporate Partners pairs with a mentor in your desired industry, and Service to School finds a mentor at a suitable undergrad or graduate school program to help you with your application. Check them out. As always, tons of great content and resources available at beyondtheuniform.io. I'm Justin Nassiri, and I'll be back soon with more great episodes.