

First of all thank you for giving the opportunity to do this journey of helping other Soldiers in their healing process. Jim, thank you for letting me speak in front of this audience.

I am a Purple Heart Recipient and a three times veteran having served one tour in Kandahar, Afghanistan and two tours in Iraq. In Iraq I served in Baghdad and in Nasyriah. During the last tour in Iraq I served as a Platoon Sergeant of a Distribution Platoon in support of a Combined Arms Battalion. I was in charge of nearly 60 Soldiers. I was wounded while on mission after an Explosive Formed Projectile hit my vehicle right above my door. I was the patrol commander. As a result of that event, I have a Traumatic Brain Injury, a kidney injury, a back injury, and a temporomandibular joint injury. That event marked the beginning of a new journey in my life. A healing journey with a lot of pain, struggles, and frustrations.

As I speak in front of you today, know that my intention is not to offend anybody. My intent is to bring my perspective as a Wounded Warrior.

The United States Army, as well as other branches, is built on values. Those values are the values that guide the Soldiers, like myself, through day to day activities, and more importantly in combat.

The Army Values are:

LOYALTY
DUTY
RESPECT
SELFLESS SERVICE
HONOR
INTEGRITY
PERSONAL COURAGE

I believe these Army Values should not be limited to the Soldiers, but should be expanded to civilians and contractors that serve the Service Members and Veterans. All of us, regardless of duty or position, should uphold values, they will help us maintain focus as we serve.

Throughout my military career I have faced many difficult situations in which I never get to put myself first. I always have to put myself second. I have to put myself second to my mission, my nation, and my Soldiers. Be known that I am not complaining about it, it is very gratifying to me. I would like to read to you what the Warrior Ethos in the Soldiers Creed says:

The Center for Mind-Body Medicine
Advanced Training in Mind-Body Medicine
San Diego 2010
Purple Heart Recipient Speech

“I WILL ALWAYS PLACE THE MISSION FIRST
I WILL NEVER ACCEPT DEFEAT
I WILL NEVER QUIT
I WILL NEVER LEAVE A FALLEN COMRADE”.

I live the Warrior Ethos to the fullest. Every time I received a mission, it always was a mission accomplished successfully, while at the same time I ensured my Soldiers and equipment safety. If in combat I am given a target you can rest assured that that target will be engaged and destroyed, no matter the cost.

During my healing journey I have face many providers that have been selfish and self centered. They want the glory for themselves and they want to make a name before anything else. Those providers have inflicted injuries to me that are far worse than the injuries I received in combat. They are injuries given to me by the same people that I fight for and by the same people that are supposed to take care of me.

It is very important for the healing of a Wounded Service Member to have a good relationship with the providers. The compassion and understanding of providers is far more effective than the expertise they might have. You have the power to change somebody’s life. I encourage you to use that power. You might become the role model and example for that person. You might become what my physiatrist is for me.

Today, as we take the Mind Body Techniques to Service Members and Veterans, I invite you to reevaluate yourself, and to provide a values based service, always putting your patients first. Try putting yourself second, it is very satisfying. The joy you will receive by making a difference in a Service Member’s or Veteran’s life is priceless. The glory will come by itself.

Thank you.