

EMBRACING CHANGE

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Michael Taylor

There are very few guarantees in life, but change is certainly among them. Change is inevitable. But that's a good thing. Change provides us with the beautiful and unique images of the four seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter.

In our professional lives, change takes place in many forms. That was certainly

the case for us. My wife Cris and I are in the midst of a big change that is consuming both of our lives. We are now the owner/operators of a relatively new Scooter's Coffee in The Colony, Texas, just north of Dallas.

I'm joining the ranks of entrepreneurship 40 years after I first enlisted in the Army. The decision to join the Army in 1977 has forever changed my life. Growing up in Nebraska, I was a screw-off in high school, and I didn't have much of a plan in my head as graduation approached. I didn't want to go to college because I knew at the time it would be a waste of my time and my parents' money. When you're a 17-year-old screw-off you need structure in your life, and the Army certainly provided that.

It's the discipline the armed services drills into young men and women that makes every veteran a prime candidate for business ownership. In the military, you quickly learn to deal with people from different walks of life and find the common goal. There are very few people who can make it in the military without developing discipline, working skills, accountability and responsibility. The military teaches you to take care of not only yourself, but the person next to you. And that's vital. From day one in boot camp, you learn that you need 15 to 25 men and women pulling in the same direction. That's the case for me and Cris as we lead our battalion of young adults to deliver our specialty coffee at a fast and

friendly pace with amazing and consistent service.

I certainly enjoyed my time in the military. The four years went by quickly. What I learned during my training as a 91 Delta, an operating room technician, propelled me for the rest of my life. My experiences built an excellent foundation for what is now more than a three-decade career as a medical device sales rep for one of the world's largest medical devices, pharmaceutical and consumer packaged goods manufacturing companies.

What you'll discover as you make the transition back to being a civilian is that most have no concept and can't fully appreciate life in the military. Dealing with becoming a civilian compared to

being in the military has its challenges, but if you lean on your friends, family and fellow veterans, it'll be okay. There isn't a blue print. It may take a while to adjust to civilian life again, but you'll get there.

Running a business has always been a bucket list item. I always thought it would be great to be an entrepreneur. My wife and I, as we do with everything, prayed about it, and we decided that it was the right path at this point in our lives. We were familiar with the Scooter's Coffee brand, its business model and vision. So, ultimately, that's my advice to you. Find a business you're passionate about; if it's something you love to do, there's a better chance you'll be successful. Commit yourself, have faith in God's plan for you, do your due diligence and consult with

other business owners. If you find someone who tells you they haven't had struggles, they're more than likely not being completely honest with themselves or you.

One of the biggest changes I've seen in this great country recently is how our veterans are treated now compared to the days following the Vietnam War. I look back on how we treated veterans back then and it was downright shameful. Now we see a complete turnaround! Our vets have always been a gift from God, so it's nice to see people treat them with the honor and respect they so richly deserve. I'm proud to be a veteran. Now, there are opportunities and benefits that we should embrace. Franchises, such as Scooter's Coffee, have generously offered discounts and credits, as well as financing, to veterans. It's nice to see that people appreciate and understand what veterans can bring to the table.

Specialist (E-5) (Ret.) Michael Taylor served four years in the U.S. Army. Currently calling Omaha, Neb. home, Taylor, along with his wife Cris, owns and operates Scooter's Coffee in The Colony, Texas. Mike Taylor enjoys playing and watching golf, and leading a bible study fellowship in his hometown. scooterscoffee.com