

## An Interview with Author Tom Wolfe ~ *Out of Uniform: Part 3*

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### *What are your final thoughts for officers preparing to transition out of the military?*

First, you're never going to get the perfect job the first time out. And if you do, you're missing something. So be careful. To find the perfect job, you should take the time to define what that perfect job is for you--that gives you a benchmark to use as you're searching for it.

If I asked you what your dream job is and you shared it with me, I'm probably very unlikely to help you find that job... but I have a sense of what makes it your dream job. Now, I can dig into your head. In the beginning of the book there is the story of an individual who I asked the question, "What is your dream job?" He replied, "That's an easy one. I would design roller coasters". I was shocked by the answer, but I learned so much about him when he answered the question. It allowed me to help point him in the proper direction.

When thinking about a dream job, try to figure out, not so much the job title, but the elements of the job, the descriptors of the job, the attributes and skill set required to do the job. Those are more important because if you can tell me those things, I can help you come up with a job title that will match with those particular descriptors.

Secondly, throughout an individual's time in the military there are going to be many occasions where that person gets patted on the back, either formally through a performance evaluation or informally, through an 'atta boy' or 'atta girl'. We tend to say thank you and we move on. Don't just say thank you and move on. Take it further. Stop, pause, and reflect. Think to yourself: I did that well, but what caused me to do it well, what skill did I employ and what attributes came into play? Keep track of your answers and include a little story that illustrates the points. Remember, stories help us remember things.

Also, as you're going about your day, and this applies to civilians as much as it does to military, sometimes you'll have a job, and you'll do that job, and you'll not only do that job well but it will make you smile. Stop and say, "Well, I did it well because of A, B and C, but it made me smile because of D, E, and F." The reason those things are important is if you think about the best job, it is a job that you're going to do it well—it's going to make you smile and it's going to give you a quality of life that takes care of your family—that's a great job objective, not one you can put on a resume, but one you can keep in the back of your head as you go through the job search.

One more item to remember, people sometimes fail to un-

derstand that at the end of the day, there are certain things that matter to you. What are those things? I'll call them a combination of wants and needs. Now, some people co-mingle wants and needs. Some people think they are the same thing. They're not. And if you think wants and needs are the same thing, you're going to be in trouble in your job search. I was guilty of this and it contributed to my false start. I found a job that met many of my wants but did not meet my needs. I wasn't smart enough to know that. So, keep track of everything that matters and put them into two categories, wants and needs and focus on a job that will satisfy your needs. Work on the wants once you get the job. Or if you're very lucky, you end up with multiple job offers, and they all meet your needs. Then pick the one that also makes the most of your wants. It a great tie breaker.



Tom Wolfe is an author, columnist, career coach, veteran, and an expert in the field of military-to-civilian career transition. For more information, visit [www.tomwolfe-careercoach.com](http://www.tomwolfe-careercoach.com) and [www.out-of-uniform.com](http://www.out-of-uniform.com)