

THE USO PRESENTS



A MONTHLY SERIES FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

You're Leaving... Again?

WITH MATT & CORIE WEATHERS



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You're Leaving... Again?

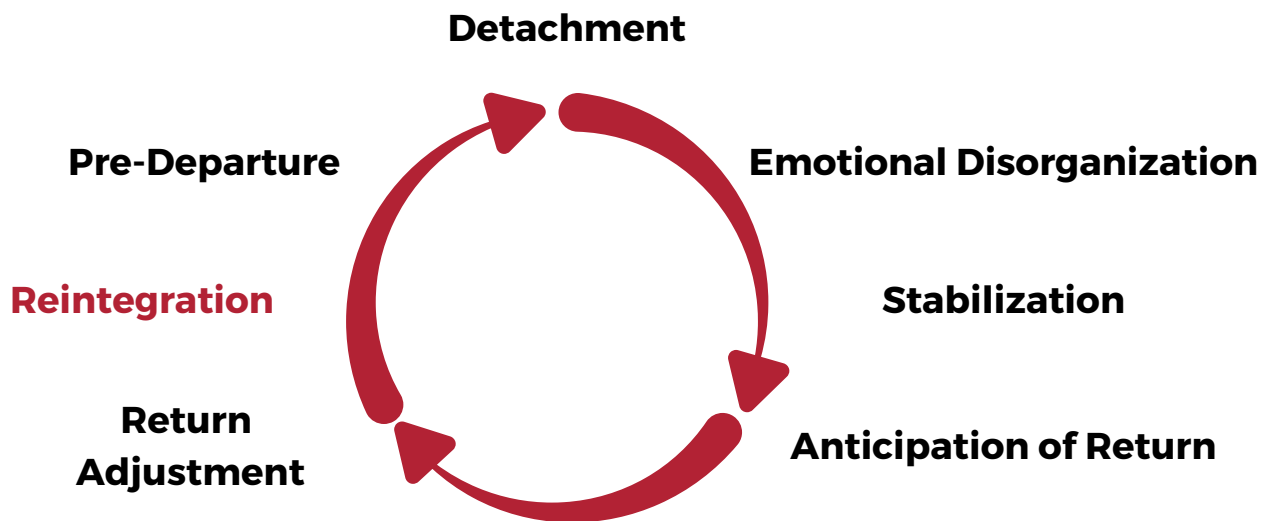
REINTEGRATION WITH
MATT & CORIE WEATHERS

Spending any time apart as a family can be difficult, but as a military family that happens more often than you would like. In fact, many military families spend almost half of their married time apart.

How do you keep a marriage and family strong despite the distance?

This series aims to answer that question. We believe that your relationship can not only stay connected, but it can actually grow and deepen even when you are apart. Whether you are going through a deployment, TDY, unaccompanied tour, temporary geo-batching situation, or other extended separation, this series is for you.

SEPARATION CYCLE- Reintegration



REINTEGRATION

"I came here tonight because when you realize you want to spend the rest of your life with somebody, you want the rest of your life to start as soon as possible."

~When Harry Met Sally



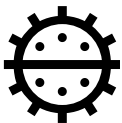
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REINTEGRATION

Reintegration can actually be the hardest part of the military family cycle.

While it is exciting to have the family reunited, it can also be the most challenging time for everyone involved if expectations are not communicated clearly. Below, we have identified two clear mines in the "minefield of reintegration" that military couples should be aware of to prevent conflict.



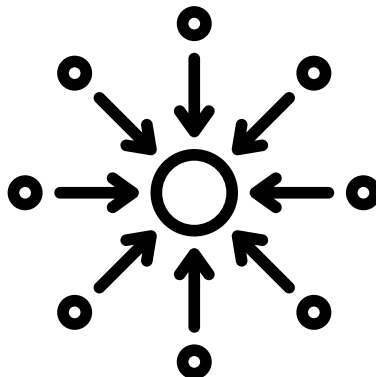
MINE #1: DIRECTION OF ENERGY

Service Member: High energy is devoted to reunification, the home, and bonding with family members. Coming into the home with too much or too little energy can clash with other family members. Here, energy is reintegrated towards the family.

Supporting Spouse: Depending on the duration and difficulty of the separation, energy has been directed towards the children and home without respite.

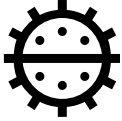
Energy needs to be devoted towards self-care, however, that may be difficult when you feel you still need to be intentional with each family member. After months of caring for others, reintegration may need to be directed towards self.

Children: Children, depending on age, will likely direct energy towards the service member in order to reunite their relationship. This can create conflict if the supporting spouse has carried the role of "disciplining parent" and the positive energy has shifted heavily towards the service member.



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MINE #2: IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENT

Service Member: After months of being confined to unfamiliar living spaces around other people, the service member wants to be in the comfort of their own home. Initially, it is freeing to choose what to eat, not according to a schedule, and to walk around the home in comfortable clothes. However, there is also an appreciation of being able to visit a store or restaurant at will.

Supporting Spouse: After months of being in the same environment, spouses may feel ready to have a change of pace, routine, or scenery. Spouses have said they are anxious for adventure, need to "get away" or are ready to break out of the routine (especially if they have been responsible for children). If left unspoken, supporting spouses will continue to feel restricted or not take intentional opportunities for self-care.

Questions for Application:

1. What is your current capacity for relational energy? Do you feel unbalanced in your need to personally reset vs reintegrate?

2. To what extent do you believe that you can advocate for your personal needs during reintegration?



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3. (For service member) What are some ways you can redirect children's energy to express gratitude to the supporting spouse for everything they did during the separation?

(For the supporting spouse) If needed, what are some ways you can affirm the joy & join in the gratitude and excitement of having your spouse home?

The goal of reintegration is to: UNIFY & RESTORE

re·in·te·grate (verb) restore (elements regarded as disparate) to unity.

Reintegration will happen more smoothly when we **collaborate & compromise**. This will require clearly communicating your **expectations**.

1. AGREE TO RESPECT EACH OTHER'S EXPERIENCE-

Each experience is unique and real to the person that experienced it. There is no comparison. Both had challenges and moments that are sacred in their own way. Listen to each other's stories and value them differently from your own.

2. TAKE TURNS SERVING

Know what you need for self-care and reintegration. Communicate that to each other and decide how and when both sets of needs will be addressed. (Don't forget to include the children's needs as well.)



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RESOURCES MENTIONED:

RESOURCES :

"The Lifegiver 5 Minute Check-in©" www.life-giver.org

Better Love Assessment

For Couples Only, Feldhahn

Deployment Masterclass with Lizanne Lightfoot

Day One Journal App

PODCAST EPISODES:

The Impact of Family Readiness on Marriage

Communicating Through Change/PCS

Reintegration Part 1 After Sacred Spaces

Reintegration Part 2 After Sacred Spaces

COUNSELING:

The Lifegiver Directory: (Military spouse, veteran, or culturally competent clinicians) Lifegiver: Breathe life into your service family www.life-giver.org

OTHER RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

Sacred Spaces: My Journey to the Heart of Military Marriage (Corie Weathers).

Lifegiver Podcast with Corie Weathers

