

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT WEAPONS OF MASS DECEPTION

“I could not be more proud of my husband for showing true vulnerability when writing *Weapons of Mass Deception*. He went through a really dark season that our entire family experienced, but I can say today that our home is filled with peace and joy. These weapons are real. And whether you are reading this for yourself or for your loved one, it’s worth it to take a courageous leap of faith to find your true purpose. You can have the life that you never imagined was possible. Thank you for fighting for yourself and your girls, Babe. Continue Mission.”

—JESSICA JONES

“I was present with Adam on the frontlines as the words of this book were being forged in the crucible of his own journey. I was present as a brother to help him through dismantling his own weapons of mass deception. That is why I can stand here with great confidence to say this book is a library-essential for any high-performing leader who is ready for life to be more than just increasing stress and anxiety. If you’re truly ready for answers and the work required, you are holding the guide that will get you to places that have only existed in your daydreams. Until now.”

—DAVID FARWELL, CEO, Catalyst, and
Consultant, The Resurgence Network

“When I hired Adam as my coach, I had no idea how profoundly he would impact my life. His methods, which are laid out in this book, provided the new paradigms I needed to finish my book and pursue

more purposefully my life's mission. Through storytelling, spiritual insight, and military organization, Adam brings a powerful punch that you will feel from the very first chapter. Read it. Study it. Devour it."

—PHIL MERSHON, author of *Unforgettable: the Art and Science of Creating Memorable Experiences*, Director of Experience at Social Media Examiner

"With over 40 years of experience working in the mental health profession, first as a clinician and then later as the chief of several mental health clinics, I'm inspired by Adam's message. It's needed more than ever. There are many books on leadership and team building, but Adam brings it to a deeper level. He examines the innermost character of the leader needed to ignite a team and family."

—ALAN JONES, Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army (Retired);
Medical Service Corps, Fellow of the American
College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE)

"My family attended an event where we heard Adam speak about these weapons, and we were blown away. Thank you, Adam, for standing up for freedom. Your faith and wisdom are helping so many with the mental struggles they face!"

—LYNDSIE HINCH, Owner, Makeup Design Studio

"In today's society, people are so caught up in the 'here and now,' they are oblivious to the deceptions that have permeated their lives. We need more focus, attention, and direction on what really matters, and my friend, Adam Jones, is equipping you with the tools you need to truly succeed. I've known Adam for over 10 years, and the transformation I've seen in his own life speaks volumes regarding what he is

honestly and openly communicating to you. Read and hear what he has to say—it is profoundly deep, yet remarkably simple.”

—EDWIN “SCOTT” CHAPIN, Chief Warrant Officer
4, U.S. Army; Mentor, Educator, and Aviator

“*Weapons of Mass Deception* will empower you to stand strong against the onslaught, recognize tactics used against you, and counter maneuver effectively. One typically considers adding a book to your library. This one would be better conceptualized as adding weapons to your arsenal.”

—DAVID MCCRERY, Retired Law Enforcement
Officer, SWAT Team Operative, Sniper, Hostage
Negotiator, and Police Academy Instructor

“Adam has a mission in this book. It is to reveal the lies regarding how we value ourselves based solely on our position and purpose. What will we do when those things change? How will we handle it? I believe his message is overdue and critical to change the culture of veterans and mission-minded leaders. I believe *Weapons of Mass Deception* is needed and long overdue.”

—GREG MOORE, U.S. Army Veteran

“For two years, I’ve been personally coached and trained by Adam. He is an effective leader who knows his purpose and his identity. People need to hear this message of freedom.”

—DALE TIKKANEN, VP, Motus Financial, Inc.

“I have no doubt this message of restoration from the weapons of mass deception that Adam discusses will resonate and transform lives.”

—DAN BEAVER, Cybersecurity Consultant

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WEAPONS OF MASS DECEPTION



Detect and Defeat the Four Weapons
Destroying Your Peace, Purpose, and Power

ADAM F. JONES



Dedication

For my girls.

You are more than I could ever dream.

*When the world tells you who to be,
remember who you already are.*

*Live with **GRIT**.*

**Give Grace. Respect Life. Invite
Others. Take Action.**

And . . .

you will move mountains.

CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	xi
<i>Introduction</i>	17
PART I. DEFINE THE WEAPON	25
CHAPTER 1. Life-Changing Lessons	27
CHAPTER 2. The Bottom Line	33
CHAPTER 3. The Breaking Point	41
CHAPTER 4. Wandering in the Wilderness	57
CHAPTER 5. The Weapon That Wages War	67
CHAPTER 6. The Heart, the Home, and the Headquarters	75
PART II. DETECT THE DECEPTION	87
CHAPTER 7. Drift Happens	89
CHAPTER 8. Weight of the World	97
CHAPTER 9. You're Leaving Again?	107
CHAPTER 10. "Only a Truck Driver"	117
CHAPTER 11. Who Have I Become?	129
CHAPTER 12. Battle Damage Assessment	141

PART III. **DISMANTLE THE WEAPON** 149

CHAPTER 13. Trust Your Instruments 151

CHAPTER 14. Break the Kill Chain 177

CHAPTER 15. Seeing the Shift 195

CHAPTER 16. Prioritizing Our People 199

CHAPTER 17. Owning Our Story 209

CHAPTER 18. Breaking the Ceiling 223

CHAPTER 19. My New Declaration 227

PART IV. **DEPLOY THE COUNTERATTACK** 237

CHAPTER 20. Deploy the Tactics 239

CHAPTER 21. Blue Sky 263

About the Author 273

Acknowledgments 275

FOREWORD

Adam Jones amazes me!
As a transformational and executive leadership coach for the past forty years, having had the privilege of addressing and coaching the likes of presidents, royal families, and business executives, I find Adam to be a truly transformational leader.

Nothing speaks louder than one's own life, and this book is a bold step in sharing his own story of radical transformation in hopes that it may stir, encourage, and spur you on in your own journey forward.

This book is not just a good idea; it is truly a testimony of his own personal journey—a journey where he has conquered the weapons of mass deception in his own heart and is now passionate about seeing that success transpire in others' lives!

When I first met Adam on a five-day leadership challenge that I was hosting, I was immediately drawn to him. It was clear to me that he was a young man with a lot of promise. He had energy, focus, determination, drive, and a NEED to succeed. He was also a young man who was clearly facing, as he calls it, attacks from the

weapons of mass deception. Weapons that were spreading into all areas of his life.

This type of young leader is not uncommon to find among emerging leaders as life is, after all, a journey of growth. We are all challenged with our own weapons of mass deception. It is unfortunate, though, that many compromise or stall on their growth journey and end up suffering major casualties in their home and families and their own perception of self as a result. These weapons of mass deception have taken out too many good men and women, and they need to be dismantled!

According to Business Group On Health approximately 800,000 people commit suicide a year globally.¹ Suicide is the fifteenth leading cause of death globally for all age groups, the second for young people aged 15 to 29, and the fifth for those aged 30 to 49. This, simply said, is a tragedy! Mental health is a serious and very real problem among emerging leaders. One of the triggers of mental health is long-term stress. *When a leader does not deal with the stresses that come from extreme hustle and resorts to “the grind” in order to gain status and influence, this unsustainable stress becomes suppressed in the heart and unfortunately finds itself working out into one’s relationships, marriage, family, and home.* This often inflicts great loss in all of the above areas, simply because they had such a NEED for success without first knowing *who* they are.

Our sociocultural influences often determine how we approach life, what values we put on, and how we see success. For example, if you were in the military for any amount of time (which both Adam and I were), then you will most likely be driven by performance and

¹ “Suicide: An Increasing Concern for Global Employers,” *Suicide: An Increasing Concern for Global Employers* | Business Group on Health, 9 Jan. 2020, <https://www.businessgrouphealth.org/resources/suicide-an-increasing-concern-for-global-employers>.

the need to achieve and succeed which, in turn, may lead you to seek affirmation from others as the source for your personal identity and worth. This is, unfortunately, very unhealthy. This is also how I found Adam!

When you can only see as far as your past, your present and future can both be underwhelming and overwhelming. When you view life through the lens of someone searching, not sure if you belong and constantly looking for a “well done” as opposed to the secure belonging that comes from being truly loved and accepted for WHO you are and not just what you’ve accomplished, life can seem like an unending obstacle course you’re ultimately due to fail at. The pursuit to measure up, often initiated in your own mind but commonly perpetuated through life’s broken and imperfect relationships, can lead you on the merry-go-round of desire: the desire to be seen, the desire to be truly accepted, and the desire to make a difference.

Adam’s transformation began when he recognized his need to connect through genuine relationships and even other father figures. Not a literal or biological father but rather a relational figure or community. Someone who leads with authority but who isn’t looking to advance his own agenda. Someone who could see in Adam what he wasn’t even able to see in himself. He became curious, open, and determined to invest in challenges, programs, and relationships that would challenge, connect, and empower him toward the future he could only dream of having. This is where we met.

His curiosity had him asking the right questions.

His openness connected him to valuable relationships where giving and receiving was both mutual and beneficial.

His determination pushed him forward when he was tempted to settle, think smaller, or give up.

His transformation today is evident. His growth journey is still being written because he hasn't stopped growing.

From an orphan mentality to the security of knowing he belongs.

From a child to a son.

From one who sees through the broken lens of "Am I enough?" to one who sees through the grace-filled lens of "I'm already loved."

From one paralyzed and minimized by weapons of mass deception that were working against him to one running and overcoming through the constant pursuit of growth and significance but, this time, coming from a place of security in knowing *who* he is as well as what he has to give. This transformation hasn't just grown him personally but has resulted in a compulsion to give, see others empowered, and help them turn their weapons of mass deception into a testimony they will share to empower others. From one transformation to another!

I'm excited for you to become the hero of your story, just as Adam has become in his! This book is filled with simple and strategic understanding that will have you dismantling the weapons of mass deception in your own life that have kept you from moving forward as the transformational leader you were designed to be—full of peace, power, and purpose!

My desire is that you would find your own story of belonging as Adam has found his. That your breakthroughs would lead you to harmony in your home, positive growth in your relationships, and a wealth that is found in more than simple monetary success. That peace would be your constant companion, purpose would be the driving force pulling you forward, and power would mark your growth journey as a transformational leader, pulling others from their point of "stuckness" to greatness.

This book is a must-read for all who believe that they are called to be a leader—who believe that they are destined to transcend the average in life. I love the verbiage that Adam uses to bring clarity to that which seeks to undermine this destiny journey of yours. Read; then, find within you the tenacity to commit to the process of change that will truly bring you to living a sustainable, holistically successful life.

This book is a transformational read written by a transformed transformational leader!

—Dr. Israel McGuicken



INTRODUCTION

As an aspiring army pilot, during initial entry rotary wing training (aka flight school), I learned something that I will never forget. Two chapters can make or break a pilot. Two chapters in a five hundred-plus page operator's manual. The 5s and 9s. Chapter 5: Aircraft Limitations and Chapter 9: Aircraft Emergency Procedures. Two chapters that must not only be read but remembered—over fifty pages that require every line to be rote memorized and recalled daily because they are deemed that important.

At any point in the day, my instructor pilot could ask me to recite how I would respond to an aircraft emergency—and I had to get it right. I had to respond perfectly. Word for word. Without hesitation. Nothing could be missed. Every word mattered. Why? Because everyone on the aircraft—including me—could *die* if I didn't know them.

Now, let's back up a few years. When I started learning to fly at twelve years old, I also had to be aware of my aircraft limitations and emergency procedures. I had to know where to find information and

how I would initially respond, but I didn't have to memorize every word and number. Why the difference? I'm not a rocket scientist, but I think it has to do with the mission. The army was training me to become a professional pilot. The work I would do would be directly tied to a mission and the preservation of the lives of many men and women. There was no room for error. No time to pull out a checklist to see what steps I should take.

Just curious. What kind of training do you remember getting for life? Think about that for a moment. What if we viewed life as a training ground? I'm not talking about preparing for some natural disaster. I'm talking about training our minds to respond to the challenges of life, override false beliefs and destructive thoughts, and respond to the chaos of parenting. How are you training to lead your family today?

WHILE HIGH-PERFORMING LEADERS HAVE
HONED THEIR SKILLS AT PUTTING OUT FIRES IN
THEIR WORKPLACE, THEY REALLY DON'T HAVE
A CLUE HOW TO RESPOND TO A FAMILY CRISIS,
A CRYING BABY, OR AN AGGRAVATED SPOUSE.

I've found that most high-performing leaders, while they've honed their skills at putting out fires in their workplace, they really don't have a clue how to respond to a family crisis, a crying baby, or an aggravated spouse. (I didn't.) We live in a time where everyone is told to do more,

hustle more, and just keep going regardless of the warning signs. Therefore, many men and women ignore or don't even know what their limitations are or how to monitor them. They just keep going, suppressing everything. (At least, that's what I did.)

If you're a man, do you wear a "Mask of Masculinity"² as Lewis Howes calls it? If you're a woman, does what Dr. Marybeth Crane calls "Superwoman Syndrome"³ plague you? Both men and women hide behind their success. We find a way to win in our careers, often at the expense of losing in our homes. How many marriages fail because of tension caused by a lack or an excess of communication, resulting in misunderstanding? It might be helpful for us to learn some 5s and 9s for life, don't you think?

When things fall apart—and they will—we almost always revert back to our training. In fact, my first engine failure (yep, it actually happened) occurred when I was in flight school. It was on my first solo flight; I didn't have to fly with an instructor pilot. I was flying with a fellow student, and instead of heading back to base, we were headed toward the ground. Luckily, we had an open field off our nose, so we executed the emergency procedure and lived to fight another day. I'm really glad they made me memorize those procedures. I'm grateful I had the tools to avert disaster.

Language is a tool. However, it can also be a barrier. Basically, without the proper language, we miss out on what we're trying to say as well as what we're trying to understand. The purpose of this book is to equip you with tools—the language to communicate and the perception to understand—and to invite you on a journey of expansion. In the military, we would go about sharing this information through

² Lewis Howes, *The Mask of Masculinity: How Men Can Embrace Vulnerability, Create Strong Relationships, and Live Their Fullest Lives* (Emmaus, PA: Rodale Books, 2017).

³ Dr. Marybeth Crane, *Drop The S; Recovering From Superwoman Syndrome* (Stonebrook Publishing, 2021).

a SITREP—a Situation Report. In our case, the SITREP would look like this:

SITUATION REPORT (SITREP)

Weapon of Mass Deception:

Any act of hidden malicious intent that exploits another person's insecurities or motives in order to deter, delay, dissuade, or destroy a multitude of people.

Target: High-Performance Leaders

The primary target for this weapon is the high-performance leader. Their drive, determination, and desires put them at a high risk for exploitation.

High-performance leaders have been trained to restrain their emotions and suppress their feelings in order to protect others and accomplish their goals. Shaped by a mission-focused culture. Formed in the crucible of challenge. A new battle is waging in their hearts and spreading through their homes. For years, they were immersed in a self-sustaining system of processes, procedures, and protocols that provided the structure they needed to connect to purpose and power.

Without those systems—they are lost.

Threat: Weapons of Mass Deception

Weapons of Mass Deception have found their target in the heart of mission-minded leaders. Often, exploiting a vulnerability in leaders' ambitions, these weapons focus on bringing destruction and chaos to their lives. Mobilized by a persistent but predictable plan of attack and concealed in thought patterns, their greatest strength is secrecy.

Exploiting a leader's motives to serve. Seducing him with a promise of impact. Luring her down a path of destruction. Overloading leaders with a burden of perfection. Their purpose is clear: complete annihilation.

Four primary weapons of mass deception have been identified. Each weapon follows an attack structure of systematically spreading from the heart to the home and finally into the headquarters (i.e., the workplace). This attack structure is what makes weapons of mass deception so deadly.

Cleverly concealed as a solution to a leader's search for significance, afterward, they perpetuate aggression, addiction, and emptiness. We cannot allow the unseen nature of the threat to allow us to underestimate its destructive capability. If this threat is ignored, many other people will pay the price.

Action: Operation Restoration

The threat's strength lies in its secrecy. Our greatest response to defeat this menace is to reveal its covert nature and launch a decisive counterattack with Operation Restoration. This response not only removes the effects of the threat but empowers high-performing leaders and their families to rise up with strength.

Operation Restoration involves four simple phases:

- > Define the Weapon.
- > Detect the Deception.
- > Dismantle the Weapon.
- > Deploy the Counterattack.

I have two objectives for us through this book: I want to *expose* a weapon and *equip* you to find freedom. I'll do this by sharing personal stories as well as those of colleagues whose names have been changed

for the sake of their privacy, baring the cracks in my armor, and presenting principles and lessons I've learned on my journey that have absolutely changed my life.

I HAVE TWO OBJECTIVES FOR US THROUGH
THIS BOOK: I WANT TO EXPOSE A WEAPON
AND EQUIP YOU TO FIND FREEDOM.

Considering the well-known sentiments of an unknown author: “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing,” it is critical we acknowledge the presence of evil. Evil exists, and it is determined to destroy those who stand for good.

My language in this book may seem either too strong or too soft, depending on your perspective. What I'd recommend is an open mind and a willingness to change and grow. Every one of us is at a different stage of our life's journey. Some will resonate with *Weapons of Mass Deception's* easygoing and relaxed language. Others need to hear the intensity.

I don't know where you are. You might be one fight away from losing your marriage or moments away from alienating your kids. Maybe you're contemplating whether or not you should stay in the fight. You might feel it's hopeless—that for every win, there is another defeat lurking around the corner. Regardless, I believe in Operation Restoration down to my core. I believe in you and your family. And

I believe that you are on your way to progressing from a maxed-out leader to a transformational leader.

By utilizing your current skills, implementing the processes in this handbook, and executing Operation Restoration, we can see freedom prevail once more in the hearts, homes, and headquarters of high-performing men and women worldwide.





PHASE I

DEFINE THE WEAPON

“The empires of the future are empires of the mind.”

—Winston Churchill⁴

⁴“Churchill, Culture, and Soft Power,” edited by Alasdair Donaldson, *British Council*, Nov. 2015, <https://www.britishcouncil.org/research-policy-insight/insight-articles/churchill-culture-and-soft-power>.



CHAPTER 1

LIFE-CHANGING LESSONS

Nothing is more painful than seeing your family experience destruction from a life that you've created. No one knows this reality better than maxed-out, high-functioning leaders. These men and women realize they have nothing left to give. They've given everything, and it's still not enough. It's a reality that can be seen during various stages of life but most often during a stage of transition.

Seeing the pain in my wife's eyes taught me many things about the complexities of weapons of mass deception, but three core lessons guide me today.

AMBITION

The first lesson became so significant that it inspired a new core value that I live by: *Ambition must be aligned to and provide availability for the accomplishment of your assignment.* If your ambition fills up your schedule and removes your ability to say yes to the greater assignments

in your life, then it's time for a realignment of your priorities. For me, after learning this lesson, I realized that my assignments are clarified through my relationship with God. Clear connections to actions that God has set up for me always come with a greater level of impact and transformation. Things such as family, relationships, and places of impact that I'm called to are assignments that I do my best to remain focused on and available for today.

To help reinforce this, I've adopted that new core value that I mentioned: availability. Think about it. The greatest leader lives a life of mission but also maintains a level of availability. Weapons of mass deception love to exploit your ambition in order to remove your ability to fulfill your assignments. They love to weigh you down and distract you from the greater purpose of your life. Don't let them.

WEAPONS OF MASS DECEPTION LOVE TO EXPLOIT
YOUR AMBITION IN ORDER TO REMOVE YOUR ABILITY
TO FULFILL YOUR ASSIGNMENTS. THEY LOVE TO
WEIGH YOU DOWN AND DISTRACT YOU FROM THE
GREATER PURPOSE OF YOUR LIFE. DON'T LET THEM.

INFLUENCE

Second, *extended service that abdicates our areas of influence is selfish*. When we abandon our territory and shirk our responsibilities of leadership for those who need us most, we are acting selfishly. Trying to grow a larger company while not serving those we've already been entrusted with. Spreading ourselves thin by joining a bunch

of organizations to inflate our egos. Sadly, I see this all the time with goal-oriented men and women. Their blind obsession with serving and making an impact in the world ruins their ability to expand their influence over those closest to them.

Leadership trainer Dr. Sam Chand explains that a legacy is not about *what* we leave behind but *who* we leave behind.⁵ Whom are you leaving behind and equipping to carry your influence? This is core to understanding our second lesson.

In the Netflix series, *The Last Kingdom*, King Alfred of Wexford is chosen to rule and expand his kingdom.⁶ Imagine if King Alfred just decided to leave Wexford with no plans for his return. What would happen if he just decided to start volunteering his time to help an organization in another kingdom while his citizens waited for him to return?

Noble service or not, it is unnecessary. He has a responsibility to those he is already leading, right? Over time, they will wonder where their king is. Did he forget about them? As months go on and seasons change, they become worried as they see the kingdom of Wexford deteriorate. They eagerly await King Alfred's return, but he's going around to all these villages in other kingdoms, seeing where he can help out. He feels more appreciated by them, so he continues his escapade while his people are in pain. They need him to resolve issues, but he's off furthering some other cause, abdicating his current place of leadership. How pissed would his citizens be? How abandoned would they feel?

Do you see how crazy that is? One of the greatest acts of service for a king is to actually serve those people who are in his territory. One of the greatest acts of service for us is to serve the people who have

⁵ Sam Chand, "Leave a Legacy," *Sam Chand*, 2 June 2020, <https://www.samchand.com/blog/leave-a-legacy>.

⁶ Stephen Butchard, *The Last Kingdom*, Netflix, 10 Oct. 2015.

already chosen to be led by us. Your wife chose you, right? Your husband chose you. So why are we avoiding them?

If we are constantly leaving to go help others, abdicating our responsibilities as a parent and a spouse, it's probably time for a realignment, like I mentioned in the first lesson. I totally get it. This was me in every shape and form. That is why I'm stressing this lesson so strongly right now. Your family needs you to lead.

WEAPONS OF MASS DECEPTION LOVE TO DRAW
MEN AND WOMEN AWAY FROM THEIR ASSIGNMENTS,
MAKING THEM THINK THE NOBLEST THING
THEY CAN DO IS SACRIFICE THEIR ROLE WITH
THEIR FAMILY IN ORDER TO HELP OTHERS.

In a mission-driven culture, where we emphasize service above self, it is easy to think “self” includes our investments in our family or other pieces of our territory. We think that it's selfless to sacrifice time with our family. But if we're willing to be real with each other, we both know it is often easier to volunteer for the next opportunity or to stay late for work than it is to stay boxed up in a home full of stress. I'm all for selfless service, but I also want us to see that one of our greatest opportunities to serve is experienced by engaging as a parent, a spouse, and a leader.

Weapons of mass deception love to draw men and women away from their assignments, making them think the noblest thing they can do is sacrifice their role with their family in order to help others.

COMMUNICATION

Third, *intentional conversations create transformational change*. We cannot downplay the power of words. The Bible says that God spoke and created life. In fact, I'm convinced that the only thing that will ever fulfill your desire to live a mission that matters is to align your words to the life you want to live. In my progression from hurting to healed, angry to peaceful, and empty to revived, many conversations had to take place when I took off the uniform.

The same will most likely be required of you.

Some conversations brought awareness, teaching me that the pain I was feeling wasn't an isolated event but, instead, a systematic shared problem among most high-achieving leaders. Some conversations brought alignment, helping me create order within the deeper plans for my life and family and realizing that results follow alignment. Other conversations brought activation, providing me with new skills and insights to unlock solutions and mobilize into mission. Regardless, I'm sure of one thing. The right conversation can change a destiny.

I'M SURE OF ONE THING. THE RIGHT
CONVERSATION CAN CHANGE A DESTINY.

In the next chapter, I invite you into some of the pivotal conversations that changed my life. My hope is that by hearing my progression—and even seeing the destruction—you will begin to see the signs in your own life and join me in bringing transformation to your heart, home, and headquarters.



CHAPTER 2

THE BOTTOM LINE

remember one day thinking to myself, *Why do I feel so empty? Who am I? Does everyone see through tired eyes like mine? Is it normal to feel so depleted for so long?* Despite all of those thoughts, I thought if I just kept pushing forward, if I just did a little more, it would get better. What I didn't realize was that, for once in my life, *doing* more was not going to help me *become* more.

Today, I wonder if it's possible that we've become so accustomed to suffering for the sake of others' gain that we have neglected to enjoy our own freedom. Is it possible that as we have been hardened by and against the challenges in the world, we've allowed them to also harden our hearts? A battle-hardened mindset might have shifted into a hardened heart. We might see others with annoyance and disdain. We might be fighting to find peace, but it seems pointless because the only way we are finding it is with pills or a bottle.

What happens when you realize that what you thought you'd been *suppressing* has only been *spreading*. Will you just fake it for the sake of your family, or will you be real?

When your toddler is screaming for her third popsicle, your exhausted spouse is rushing around in the kitchen preparing meals for tomorrow, dishes are piling up in the sink, your dogs are barking to go outside, your job feels meaningless, and your newborn is screaming because the milk isn't warm enough, so you have to wait for it to heat up even more, how do you respond?

What do we do when we feel like we're going to lose it?

ONE MORE DEPLOYMENT. ONE MORE DEGREE. ONE
MORE RANK. ONE MORE PROMOTION. . . . WHEN
WILL IT EVER BE ENOUGH? WHEN WILL
WE BELIEVE THAT WE ARE ENOUGH?

One more deployment. One more degree. One more rank. One more promotion. Maybe that's what we are missing, right? Just one more enticing carrot dangled in front of us with the promise of reward. When will it ever be enough? When will we believe that we are enough?

I don't think we'll ever answer that through the voice of someone else—from an outside source. We have to hear it from within. I had to hear it from my Creator. The chances of that happening with such a barrage of loud voices telling me to hurry, max out, and hustle were slim until I learned to shut them up. I'm going to show you how to do the same thing.

BOTTOM LINE UP FRONT (BLUF)

Let's get right to the point. As a speaker and tactician, I'm not really a fluff guy, so I don't want to waste time. This book is going to be intense.

That's just my personality. I'm the guy who has to slow down and ask myself, *What does fun look like, and how do I have fun with family?* Thank God for my wife because she keeps me on track.

If you or someone you know is about to crash, you don't have time to waste. In the fast-paced culture of the military, when people get wordy trying to explain something, they are often quickly interrupted and reminded to just give the Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF). (It's so effective it's been integrated into the corporate world and marketplace too.) If a leader has questions after hearing the BLUF statement, they'll ask them.

So here's the BLUF that I want you to understand immediately. The majority of high-performance leaders are targeted by at least one of four weapons of mass deception:

- 1) One weapon weighs us down by a pressure to get it right, to do it perfectly, and to find our value in our latest measurement.
- 2) One weapon causes us to drift from those who need us most based on our diluted focus and overly ambitious pursuit of impact.
- 3) Another steals our joy by causing us to feel like no matter what we do, it's never good enough and that we have never been enough.
- 4) The last weapon diminishes our power based on our reliance on prior labels and current titles.

When all of these weapons are mobilized against us, the effects can actually be deadly. I'm not exaggerating. This is one reason we're seeing depression, divorce, and death from suicide at rates higher than ever before.

Systematic thoughts and beliefs are driving our behaviors and leading us to destruction, and we can't even see them. What I found was that as I tried to suppress the stress and tension, *my wife* could feel it. In other words, it confirmed what I'd already suspected: what

we suppress in our hearts spreads into our homes. We aren't fooling anyone. We might not notice it right away. We think if we just hold it all in, everyone else will be okay. We will be the only ones to suffer. However, this only works for so long.

Since these weapons will target anyone with ambition, every high-impact man or woman, whether young or old, is likely feeling the effects of their destruction, and without training to detect the threat, it will only get worse.

If you've experienced a strong streak of success in your past, I'm sure you've learned that despite all the achievements, it's never enough, and it will never be enough. If you don't believe me, just listen to some of the *Leadership Accelerator* podcast episodes in which we've interviewed high-performing leaders, and you'll hear that deception doesn't discriminate.⁷ These weapons target firefighters, SWAT officers, detectives, sailors, airmen, fathers, mothers, businesspeople, husbands, wives, engineers, owner-operators, ministers, and people from all walks of life who are determined to change the world.

As a former Army National Guard Black Hawk helicopter pilot and captain, when I stepped out of the service, the destruction from all four of these weapons became evident in my life. I didn't have the language to recognize it for what it was or communicate it then, but the pain was real. And the worst part was that they weren't just hurting me but everyone around me.

I remember one day looking into the eyes of my wife and seeing a dull, tired look of disappointment staring back at me after I had let her down again. That caused me to wake up. What have you seen with your spouse, kids, or friends that just felt like a dagger to the heart?

⁷ "Continue the Mission Podcast," *Buzzsprout*, <https://continuethemissionpodcast.buzzsprout.com/>.

I've particularly noticed that when someone dedicates their life to the service of others, whether as a military member, first responder, or other public servant, they are even more vulnerable to these weapons. They experience pain most people will never know, and they've been trained to suppress their stress. They have become proficient at enduring the suffering. Their mind reinforces an automation where they downplay their feelings with no intention of changing. Only when we can *shift focus* and clearly see those who need us most will we see the freedom we are searching for.

I knew how to put on the mask of masculinity.⁸

I knew how to hide.

But when I saw the pain in my wife's eyes, when I thought of the future of my relationship with my firstborn daughter disintegrating, I knew it was time to change. Just like in the cockpit, I had to acknowledge my limits and use my emergency procedures. For the first two years after stepping out of the service, it was a struggle. Whether you are a veteran or not, we all have experienced massive transitions since the pandemic hit. It's crazy how the timing worked out, but only two months before COVID-19 shut down the world, I attended my final formation.

As I'll explain, it wasn't long before I found myself experiencing new feelings of loneliness and resentment.

Emptiness began to fill my heart.

I didn't know how to be present.

I couldn't understand how to move forward. I just felt trapped in transition.

⁸ Lewis Howes, *The Mask of Masculinity: How Men Can Embrace Vulnerability, Create Strong Relationships, and Live Their Fullest Lives* (Emmaus, PA: Rodale Books, 2017).

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I didn't realize that each of the four weapons of mass deception was targeting not only my *heart* but my *home*. What I was suppressing in my heart was spreading into my home. The more that I ignored the war that was waging inside my heart, the worse it got for everyone else. I couldn't hide it any longer; I had to acknowledge a crash was coming. I remember thinking:

I'm drifting.

I'm maxed out.

I have no idea what to do now.

Something powerful happens when we surrender to a greater power, recognize that we don't have all the answers, and admit that we need some help. For me, my relationship with God was magnified during this time. When I said, *I have no idea what I'm doing. You take the controls, God. I'm done trying to lead my life since it's clearly not working.* That's when I began to develop the necessary tactics to not only detect these weapons but to disarm them from the inside out.

I'm not saying we are the only cause of everyone's stress and tension in our families; I'm saying we are either adding to it or taking it away. Leadership expert Dr. John C. Maxwell taught me that people are either adding to or subtracting from their relationships.⁹ The same thing goes for you. Are you adding to the stress or taking it

⁹ John C. Maxwell, *21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004).

away? Are you giving power to your family and friends, or are you taking it from them?

My hope is that when I share with you some of the patterns in my life, they will help you clearly see situations in yours with a new perspective. That you'll receive the tools to *define, detect, dismantle, and deploy* a solution for the very weapons that once caused you to suffer. That you will be better equipped to restore the heart of your home and bring the transformation that is needed during this time of your life.

There's no guarantee, but there's hope:

- › Your heart will be revived and your marriage restored.
- › Your relationships, both with your children and friends, will be strengthened.
- › You'll see lives transformed because you showed up with clarity.
- › And you will finally unlock the power in your presence like never before.

We can only give what we have:

- › I can give peace because I have peace.
- › I can give joy because I have joy.
- › I can give confidence because I have confidence.
- › That which I have, I can give.

And, I can guide you to experience that same transformation if you are willing to do the work. You'll begin to see clearly your limits and the emergency procedures that you need to implement as you follow this simple four-step framework to upgrade your confidence, connection, and clarity.

Today is the greatest day to begin. Let your best days be your next days, be a hero in your home, become the most attractive and magnetic

person your spouse has ever met, and get ready to reach greater levels of influence. *Weapons of Mass Deception* won't just motivate you. It will *activate* you.

WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED THE FIRST THREE CHAPTERS OF WEAPONS OF MASS DECEPTION. READY TO CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY?

Go to AdamFJonesBook.com and grab the full book today.