



HONOR

STRENGTHENING USAFA'S FOUNDATION BUILT ON THE CODE

“WE WILL NOT LIE, STEAL, OR CHEAT, NOR TOLERATE AMONG US ANYONE WHO DOES.”



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— LT. COL. (RET.)
XAVIER BRUCE '00



The X Factor

Nonprofit seeks to uplift others to the best versions of themselves

By Jeff Holmquist

Dr. X likes to share a simple message with former and current military members — “I’m here for you.”

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Xavier Bruce ’00 is a certified life coach who recently founded a nonprofit organization — Uplift In-Powerment — to assist underserved active-duty personnel and veterans in the Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia region.

“We have been in your shoes,” Bruce tells his clients, “and it’s our turn to help you.”

The organization’s primary focus is helping veterans through the stressful transition from military to civilian life.

“When it comes to this particular crossroads in their life, they are not alone,” he says.

Through educational workshops and outreach services, Bruce and his team help Black, Hispanic, Asian, LGBTQ+ and other underserved individuals reach their full potential.

The power to overcome, Bruce claims, is found within each of us. The key is unlocking that hidden potential and pushing toward self-improvement.

CAREER CHOICES

Dr. X knows a thing or two about overcoming.

Raised in a single-parent household in Arkansas, Bruce learned important lessons about perseverance and grit from his mother, Linda.

“My mom did it all for the whole family in terms of taking care of us,” he says.



Lt. Col. (Ret.) Xavier Bruce '00 is pictured with his wife, Alisa. They work together in the nonprofit Uplift In-Powerment. (Photo by Ryan Hall)

As he approached high school graduation, Bruce decided to pursue an appointment to the Air Force Academy. His older brother, Alexandro Armour ’93, had graduated from the institution several years prior.

“I knew my mom couldn’t really afford to send me to college and pay for it, so I followed in my brother’s footsteps,” he says. “It worked out.”

Another motivating factor for Bruce was the fact that his family had a long history of military service. Many of his male relatives served in the Army and Navy. ▶

“It was tradition,” he explains.

As his USAFA career kicked off, Bruce played for the Falcon football team. The rigors of the academics, however, made it impossible for him to continue.

“I had to quit at one point because my grades were terrible,” he says. “I don’t remember how many semesters I was on academic probation.”

No one was more amazed that Bruce graduated with a degree in biology than himself. At one point he carried a 1.87 grade point average, and the road to graduation looked bleak.

“But I built resilience and figured things out,” he adds. “I kind of surprised myself.”

Bruce’s first Air Force job was as a cyber operations officer. During a force reduction in 2005, Bruce retrained into the health care administration career field, completing his master’s in business administration at Wayland Baptist University in 2004.

Bruce started off in aeromedical evacuation, assisting wounded warriors return to their home of record.

“They were coming back from places like Afghanistan,” he says. “I helped handle the transportation.”

Later in his career, after completing his doctorate in global supply chain management at Walden University in 2011, Bruce became a senior health care administrator dealing with budgets, research, planning and policies at various military medical facilities.

“I went from having a 1.87 GPA at the Academy at one point to getting my doctorate,” he smiles. “I’m not afraid to tell that story, because now I’m ready and willing to help others.”

BEEN THERE

Although on track to reach his career goals, Bruce faced one of his biggest personal challenges in 2011. Deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan, at that time, he was near a breaking point.

“I was stressed out,” he admits. “I had the stress of a rocky marriage, raising a son with autism, struggling through the doctoral dissertation process and experiencing rocket attacks ... all at the same time.”

Right or wrong, Bruce kept his struggles to himself. He didn’t seek the mental health



TOP: Dr. X (left) is pictured with members of the National Association for Black Veterans chapter in Western Maryland.

ABOVE: Lt. Col. (Ret.) Xavier Bruce pictured while deployed to Afghanistan. (Submitted photos)

services available to him, and he didn’t want to worry his mom by complaining.

“I was close to quitting,” he admits. “I was close to throwing in the towel.”

Instead, Bruce decided to focus on solutions rather than focusing on his problems. It helped turn things around.

“I said, ‘You know what, I’ve got to uplift my damn self,’” he recalls.

He set about researching proven steps to improved mental and physical health.

“I turned to self-learning,” he says, “and delved into the practices of energetic self-perception, strategic influence theory, fitness, nutrition and biology.”

He settled on a framework he now calls Strategic Energetic Transition, centered on concrete techniques and holistic solutions. It’s knowledge he shares with others to this day.

TRANSITION TIME

When he retired from the Air Force, Bruce founded and became chief executive officer of UpLift Energy Coaching LLC, a for-profit life coaching firm devoted to helping veterans transform from “victim to victory.”

“You don’t find too many brothers that are life coaches,” he laughs. “There are mainly white females in that space. But I have a passion for helping others.”

By becoming a coach, Bruce says he gives other Black men the opportunity to talk with someone who looks like them and has similar life experiences.

“I’m not trying to be divisive,” he adds. “This is a marginalized group of people that we’re trying to help. One goal is to eradicate Black veteran suicide.”

A key resource he uses in coaching is his own book, “Uplift Your Damn Self! A Black Veteran’s Guide for In-Powerment,” published in 2020.

The for-profit business helps clients overcome limiting beliefs that can hold them back from success. Bruce specializes in coaching Black male veterans in midlevel leadership positions.

“Our ideal client feels unwelcomed, undervalued, underappreciated, underemployed, underpaid, and/or misunderstood in the workplace or at home,” he says.

Through workshops, keynote speeches and group coaching, the subscription-based service motivates clients to change their circumstances.

IN-POWERMENT

As he ramped up his coaching business, Bruce recognized the need to offer a helping hand to underserved veterans and active-duty personnel through inevitable transitions.

He launched a 501(c)(3) organization called Uplift In-Powerment in 2019 to offer free assistance to clients in transition. Unfortunately, the effort began as the COVID-19 pandemic shut down in-person gatherings.

“We couldn’t get as much traction as we wanted because it was going to be face-to-face types of workshops,” he says.

Now, as the pandemic begins to wane, Bruce says he hopes the nonprofit flourishes.

The self-help program centers around the acronym “F.A.C.A.D.E.” — fitness, awareness, connectedness, anxiety, depression and energetic self-perception.



By focusing on and addressing those “pain points,” Bruce says families and individuals in transition can thrive.

“Whatever you need,” he says, “we’re here to help. We can help specifically with those feelings of stress, anxiety, depression, shame, guilt and disappointment.”

With a current staff of six, Uplift In-Powerment has helped many veterans through

the challenging global pandemic over the past two years.

Bruce says he’s almost ready to expand the reach of the nonprofit to other cities with a large military presence.

“Once it’s robust and efficient here in the DMV [D.C., Maryland, Virginia], I want to create it in other areas,” he says. “We just want it to spread.”