Men do not seek help with emotional problems as often as women do. When they do seek help, it is often because of an external coercion rather than a voluntary introspective odyssey. When the seeker is a man with military training,
the need to explore one's self is even more constricted. If the seeker is a man with military combat experience, then the need to introspect into one's self becomes practically unfelt and unknown. Values in a male military culture do not include dependence, lack of control, or perceived weakness. Rather, stoic control of one's feelings, exhibition of strength, defense of the vulnerable, and independent action are desired values. These values do not fit easily, if at all, with psychotherapy.

Gary Brooks elucidates in *Working With Veterans* the difficulty of engaging a well-integrated, highly accomplished former military man in an initial psychotherapy session. The patient, Cyrus, a military man with 20 years of experience and recently retired, speaks to Brooks about his early life as a young African American and his relationship with his father. The issues around the father–son relationship become clearer as the interview progresses. Cyrus discusses or alludes to the desire to accomplish what his father was not able to do as a Black man in the 1950s. In the clip analysis—a discussion between Brooks and Jon Carlson, the host of the program—themes that could be elaborated in later sessions are raised. How does someone who has been discriminated against historically on a racial basis become a patriot? What is commitment to country and to the flag?

Being in the military and becoming an officer were ways to concretely indicate Cyrus's patriotic feelings and to validate his father's commitment to military life. Clearly, being appreciated, valued, and not taken for granted are core needs in Cyrus's life. By being in control and in a controlled, structured, predictable
environment like the army, Cyrus was able to meet the core needs. As his father had taught him, it is a man's work that defines that man. One gains recognition and pride in one's self through one's work.

To ensure that these needs are met and nurtured, Cyrus presents as a controlled, somewhat guarded man who becomes annoyed when he is not in control or when he is placed in a passive posture. It is these beliefs and behaviors that contribute to Cyrus's recent divorce. He felt that he had not been validated in his marriage and that he was not appreciated. The implementation of a nonambiguous hierarchy and definite expectation of the gender roles in the marriage prevented the very appreciation and validation he wanted. Brooks does not pathologize these behaviors by labeling them with Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (4th ed., text rev.; American Psychiatric Association, 2000) terms, such as narcissistic personality disorder. Rather, he attempts to place the behavior in the social norms of the male within a military subculture, which supports emotional detachment. It is approaching these issues within a masculine, military-culture context that allows the psychologist, Brooks, to engage with Cyrus and to elucidate themes for further discussion in future sessions.

Cyrus does not see himself as having difficulty with intimacy or as not being vulnerable or introspective. He views relationships as being somewhat “messy” and, if they cannot be resolved, then one should go on to another task or relationship. Again, Cyrus cannot remain involved in a situation where he feels out of control. He views himself as a focused person but not rigid. The social
context of the military culture dictates that one must be focused on the task at hand, which suggests having full control. This is not seen as being rigid but responsible and in command. The very nature of psychotherapy creates an environment of vulnerability and uncertainty that diminishes the control of the patient.

Brooks uses an empathic, caring approach in this interview but also uses humor and some jocularity to draw Cyrus forth. These techniques are useful with many patients, to be sure, but with military veterans the use of humor, well timed and placed, is of great value to break down vigilance and emotional armor.

Psychologists working with combat veterans have the daunting task of developing interventions that will address the numerous layers of guilt, shame, fear, and despair. The psychotherapeutic environment attempts to modify a warrior—a man trained to kill—and, in many cases, who has killed, into a gentle man; this is a difficult task.

There has been increased attention to using evidence-based interventions with veterans. These may include various kinds of cognitive-oriented therapies. These therapies usually require that the patient engage in journaling, bibliotherapy, and evaluating one's cognitive processes requiring sessions of, usually, a weekly nature. These are not interventions that most veterans, especially combat veterans, are willing to do, and, if they are, it is not for long.

Brooks, although not working with a combat veteran in this DVD, suggests that he knows how to create the interpersonal relationship with a veteran that provides the patient a safe, supportive, caring environment in which he can,
over time, talk about the issues that affect him. The use of this type of therapy allows the patient to be exposed to disturbing images, thoughts, and sensations in a safe and relaxed environment. The issues become less threatening. Brooks does not, in this DVD, address the severely damaged combat veteran, but one can infer from his interaction with Cyrus that he could gently support the combat veteran through emotional shoals.

The structure of the DVD is appealing. The discussion clips between Brooks and Carlson highlight the themes that could be followed in later sessions. Carlson's analysis of the therapeutic interaction is insightful and permits Brooks to elaborate more fully on what he was experiencing during the session and how he might further engage Cyrus in the future.

Reference