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Making the decision

By Laura Jeffrey - Decision Times

Michelle LaBrosse left the Air Force after four years of service and eventually launched Cheetah Learning Systems, a project management training company.

But, she said, leaving uniform as soon as your contract is up isn't necessarily the best thing you can do for your civilian career. LaBrosse offered the following advice:

DON'T FRET ABOUT LENGTH OF SERVICE.

After six or seven years, many service members "make the decision to get out because they're worried about what their prospects are going to be in the business world," LaBrosse said. "I don't think it's really relevant — you're seeing people switch their careers all the time nowadays."

CONCENTRATE ON SKILLS.

Get as much education as you can while in uniform, LaBrosse said. "I think the military is one of the best-run organizations on the planet. So any type of management training you can take, do it. It's going to really help."

FORMULATE A GAME PLAN.

Even if you make a career of the military, you're still young at retirement, LaBrosse said. "You've got another 30 years of working ahead of you."

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