

Take a stand, but do it gracefully.

I've seen it far too many times. You've got a bad situation and you're steaming mad, and the first thing you think to do is start screaming at someone. Whose fault is it? Who can you blame? Who is going to answer for this? Someone is, so you just start yelling. The sad part is that yelling at the wrong person can land you in a world of hurt. Yelling at the right person and not having the facts straight can do just as much damage.

Let's face it, there are going to be times in this journey where you think you've been slighted or someone you know has been "done wrong." I would be a fool to tell you that you'll never be mad about anything or never feel like you've got to take a stand. Taking a stand is not always a bad thing to do. Our soldiers fight for the very right to have freedom of speech and freedom of opinions.

I'm only asking you to stop, think, and then react. I've seen people fight battles that weren't even theirs simply on grounds of he said, she said. They only ended up looking like fools when the persons they were fighting for didn't tell them the whole story. I've seen people stand up for something they had not educated themselves on or gathered the facts to even argue their point effectively.

Let's take a moment to think about this. Say you have a situation that is very serious and is a concern of yours, do you think that Command is going to listen to what you have to say if you knock on the door of their residence at 8pm at night and start spouting off your personal feelings about the situation? Probably not. First of all, most of us live in our own little worlds. What affects us might not be the top priority in another's life. They would be taken back, immediately put on the defense, and if you were lucky they wouldn't call the military police to have you escorted away. You'd be branded "the crazy spouse," and from that point on, it wouldn't matter what you had to say, no one is going to listen.

You'd be much more effective gathering the facts, finding out the *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *how* of the situation, and making an appointment to discuss the situation with someone in the chain of command that could help you.

As Army spouses we have tons of power at our hands if we know how to use it. We have initiated changes in policy, created wonderful organizations to fill gaps where the Army hasn't provided, and we raise Army families and communities every day (an accomplishment in itself). We are smart, resourceful, and gosh dang it people like us. What they don't like is a screaming spouse armed with no knowledge, facts, or solutions that is just out to intimidate. So, don't be afraid to take a stand but do it gracefully.