

What Military Spouses Understand About Leadership

That Most People Miss

Most people think leadership is about authority: Rank. Title. Position.

But if you want to understand real leadership, watch a military spouse.

In a previous episode of *The Enduring Mindset Podcast*, I sat down with Alicia Kudrna, who brings a perspective most people never see.

She has lived the military life three ways:

- As a service member
- As a spouse
- As a mother of a service member

What she shared goes deeper than leadership. It gets into trust, identity, and what it really takes to support someone carrying weight you cannot see.

Leadership Is Not One-Size-Fits-All

One of the simplest and most overlooked lessons she shared:

People receive things differently.

Whether it is praise, communication, or support, what works for one person does not work for another.

“Everybody receives it differently... you need to know how that person wants to receive it.”

That applies everywhere:

- Leadership
- Marriage
- Parenting
- Teams

If you do not understand your people, you are not really leading them.

The Reality Most People Do Not See

There is a version of military life most people never talk about.

It is not deployments.

It is not training.

It is what happens at home.

While one person is carrying the mission, someone else is:

- Holding down the house

- Raising the kids
- Managing chaos behind the scenes

And doing it without adding pressure.

Alicia put it simply:

She did not make her problems his problems.

That is leadership.

Not loud. Not visible. But critical.

Identity Does Not Just Affect Veterans

We talk a lot about veterans losing identity after service.

But it affects spouses too.

Their identity is often tied to:

- Supporting someone else
- Holding things together
- Being the constant

When things shift, they have to adjust too.

That is a layer most people completely miss.

What Strong Relationships Actually Require

One of the most practical takeaways:

You have to know your person.

Not surface level. Really know them.

- When to step in
- When to back off
- When to push
- When to just be present

“If you know your spouse really well, you will pick up on the cues.”

That is not instinct.

That is effort.

Communication Prevents Resentment

A lot of frustration does not come from big problems.

It comes from unspoken expectations.

Alicia gave a real example:

Spending hours cleaning,
only for someone to walk in and undo it without noticing.

That is where resentment starts.

The fix is simple, but uncomfortable:

Say something.

Be clear.

Communicate what you need.

The Hard Truth About Support

Supporting someone, especially a veteran, is not easy.

It requires:

- Patience
- Awareness
- Emotional control
- Timing

Sometimes the hardest part is knowing:

You cannot fix everything.

Sometimes your role is to:

- Create space
- Keep things stable
- Be there when it matters

Final Thought

Leadership is not always visible.

Sometimes it looks like:

- Holding things together quietly
- Supporting without recognition
- Showing up consistently

Sometimes the strongest person in the room
is not the one in uniform.



Listen to the full episode:

<https://open.spotify.com/show/7fQ5oHIOZe94Jcjj6ytL2h?si=0c4c82fc29c6465f>

If you're a veteran or leader trying to figure out your next move, I share conversations and insights like this every week through The Enduring Mindset Podcast.

Related conversations:

- *You Don't Have to Do This Alone*
- *Stop Waiting for Permission to Become Who You Already Are*
- *You Can Have It All... Just Not All at Once*