

Scruffin' Us

When others “scruff” us based on their personal perception, but it is really about how they feel rather than reality, this can harm us. Sometimes we just have to let these people go. Often, humble people who are kind and gentle are preyed upon in this way; domination tactics and control are inevitable realities we may encounter.

A part of learning to navigate life means we also have to navigate people, and our “healthy vibe” is not uncompromisable. We are humans, just human spirits, who have many emotions and feelings. Ultimately, we just want to be happy. We are sensitive, but we should not be insensitive, especially to the emotions of others. We are learning to navigate all kinds of things, and so staying grounded is a major part of this process.

An example, I am a veteran, and I am very proud to be a veteran. I love my country, and I support our military, and I will continue to do so because this is truly a part of who I am. As a retiree, now a chaplain, the military is my professional career. The military is also my friends, who I consider like family, and also some of the greatest leaders and mentors I have had. So, like many vets, I sometimes rock a symbol of camaraderie here and there, a hat, a T-shirt, a bag. I actually love military style, and I am not going to change either. Why? Because I *fr*ggin'* love the military. It is a lifestyle. It is who I am.

But at this time in history, a lot of people are very wicked toward our military, and simply wearing a hat or a symbol means we may experience microaggressions, mean muggin', if you will. No matter how kind or loving we present ourselves. Even if we have not really interacted with others, or know them, they may still seek to harm us. This is the current movement of a much more foreign landscape than what many of us are used to. Our country is more divided than ever, and it is politically hostile.

Let's face it, activists are calling veterans gestapo. We are not actually getting along. Many civilians are very uneducated on what the military actually does. ~Hurricane cleanup. We go to church. Fire rescue. Mandatory volunteering. Charity work. Still, as vets and as our military does, we will continue showing up for our communities and our country.

However, it is also important to acknowledge that many people want to abolish the police and military altogether. They want us to change, by change they mean, like *disappear*. It isn't realistic; it is also manipulative, harmful and forceful. Fighting words, *basically*. Where others get to be mean and sabotage our military with no personal accountability. They have changed, not *us*.

And so, the premise of this statement is that I have not changed my uniform or the love I have for my country, and I do not plan on it anytime soon (*so back off bucko* ~old maritime saying). I am grounded in my own mission, which is to remain a charitable retired Air Force servant, and this is who I am.

So while the world around us may be changing and becoming very hurtful, I can thank the military for teaching me how to balance my steps, and sometimes, *face the other direction*. As a veteran, my duty is to hold the fort and the flag for those who stay loyal to our nation and

our people, not those who seek to hurt us. I know, that idea may not what people like to hear, but that is life, *ce la vie*. Support your troops and we will support you, that's the golden rule.

Even when it is subtle or only spiritual, dehumanizing, taking aim, and fighting our military and veterans in any way sends a kind of message ~ that our olive green bags are packed and we are deploying, but let us be clear, it is in support of a very different world than that which activists and foreigners are aiming to create, one that seeks to dominate, "scruff," and hurt us.

We are not here to be harmed. We are here to answer our nation's call.