Military stress and personality traits discussion

by Brittany Kohler, Content Manager
May 4 2015 3:15 PM

In a discussion thread from my Adult Development class, a classmate replied to my post and her response nearly knocked me out of my seat.

The topic was about personality traits and how it relates to stress, especially in a work environment. I decided to write about being in the Marine Corps. I was really bothered by her response to my initial post, but I am wondering if that is because I was in the Marine Corps and civilians just don't understand. Some people are so misinformed about how the military works that I wanted to clear a little bit up.

CLASSMATE: Being in the military, I heard, does change a person's personality. Being ordered around all the time would be hard for me. Some people prefer someone telling them how to think and feel. Stressful situations are my downfall. I get really excited when I am stressed out and snap on people all the time. I wish I could control my feelings when I am stressed, but it is very hard, especially lately…

MY RESPONSE: I don't agree that the military changed a person's personality, it surely did not change mine; I am the same person I am now than I was before I joined. Over my time in the Marines, I didn't change who I am, but I did change my behavior.

I don't like being ordered around or people telling me what to do either, I don't think anyone does. But eventually, if you work hard, you become the one in charge and accept the responsibility that brings about personal and team accomplishment and then you're the one "barking orders".

The Marine Corps takes great pride in leadership. Leadership is not telling people how to "think" or "feel", its mentorship and guidance that shapes the Marine into a morally sound, professional individual. This type of brotherhood is critical to accomplish a mission, improve the work environment and influence camaraderie throughout.

The Marine Corps trains us in stressful situations because, well, war is stressful. So if we are trained in laid back, relaxing environments, we would be prepared when overseas. Managing your stress is paramount. Because of the training I have achieved in stressful situtations, I am able to work more efficiently in the work environment.

I understand that being in the military is not for everybody, but we are not robots and it may not be as bad as people may think. I know it did alot for me and I am a better person because of my experiences in the Marine Corps.

Having said that, I have not been to war. I do not suffer from post traumatic stress disorder or anything like that due to the fact that I have not been on the battlefield and endured the pain that many others have. I understand those that have been on the front lines and have seen the battlefield may change due to the traumatic experiences. But not everyone that joins the military sees battle, especially women (obviously). I am speaking mainly from working in a work environment stateside.

Do you think the military changes someone's personality?

Do you think the military is just a bunch of yelling and ordering around?

I am curious as to what people think the military is like.