

Making the Most of Your Military Lifestyle

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We've all been there, standing in a group of civilians talking about their families, they ask what you do and you smile, "We're military". You see the look, you know what I'm talking about, yes, that look. They respond, "Oh I just don't think I could do it." This always cracks me up one side and down the other. What do they think? You are a glutton for punishment? They act like it's a physical choice of yours to be a part of this lifestyle. Any true military wife knows, it's not that you *like* to move around fifteen billion times in your life, that you enjoy having the movers trash your new armoire, or even that you enjoy living most of your life as a geographical bachelorette, better known as a single, married person. Or maybe you enjoy the single parenting life of a married person? You don't choose it, sometimes it chose you, and sometimes it just is. It's what you do. So here are some tips to help you do it with grace, do it with style, and hey in the end you might end up actually *liking* it after all (well except for that being alone and armoire trashing action).

Seek out friends & support

- Join OSC/ESC
- Volunteer
- Attend neighborhood functions
- Participate in your Unit's FRG
- Attend Unit events
- Network

Remember, some of your best friends and contacts you will make in the most unlikely places. Never stop growing, and never stop seeking new contacts.

Don't be afraid to seek help

- Chaplain
- Counselors
- Friends & neighbors

Look, everyone has issues, and if they say they don't, then that is an issue in and of itself. Do not be afraid to seek help and talk to someone about your life. Even the happiest person or couple has things that they need to talk about once and awhile.

Be positive

- No negative attitudes allowed
- Make yourself the "glass half full" kind of gal

Remaining positive about your lifestyle choice is almost always a sanity-saving endeavor. At least it has been for me. Sure there are times when life throws you curveballs (more so than normal in a military career because **SURPRISE** *you're not* in control).

Focus on what you want – and go for it

- It's *your* life too
- Empower yourself

Just because you are a military spouse doesn't mean you can't have your own life and career outside of being married to the military. Sure, it is more common that military spouses remain at home given their family's career choice, however that doesn't mean that you *have* to. Choose work or a volunteer position outside of the home if that is what makes you feel "complete". You might even consider entrepreneurship, and build a mobile career.

Communicate & Share

- Talk to your spouse
- Share *everything* (that includes your feelings, but also, the wash, paying the bills, and feeding the dog)
- Become experts at parenting together, even if you're apart
- Develop a loving relationship full of touch and expression

I had to get mushy on you, didn't I? It's so true though. This is the key to a successful marriage in the military. There will be times when you will be on your own without your spouse. That doesn't mean that you will be doing it all alone, unless you make it that way. Make a conscience effort, in presence or not, to communicate openly with your spouse about *everything*. Parent together, do finances together, be a "team".