



## ***Why We Fail: Why the Efforts of Thousands of Service Members and Veterans' Advocates Hasn't Changed Our Military – And Why That Won't Change Soon***

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### **We lack “grit”**

In Angela Duckworth's hallmark book “Grit”, she outlined her simple formula: [Grit = Passion + Persistence](#). We have the former, but we lack the latter. We like quick and easy solutions and victories and are hence defeated by an institution (The DoD) that wins by doing nothing. In short, we are consistently out-gritted.

### **We only see trees, but no forests**

We tend to focus on singular symptomatic issues, not root causes – and if root causes aren't addressed, the same problems will inevitably re-appear, just in different forms. The plight of the Texan Eskimo is important, but it is not systemic, and it is not a root cause for our military's decline.

### **Our cause becomes *ourselves* and no longer the cause**

When it becomes about the individual (or their victimization), or the organization, or worse yet, the Almighty Dollar, we are lost. In time, we suffer from what our military courses taught us and warned us to avoid: mission creep. There is a business side to advocacy, but advocacy is not a business.

### **We get lost in the noise**

We lack unity of effort. Today there are seemingly thousands of disparate voices instead of a few unified ones (most pinging over-worked and under-staffed Congressional offices). We could accomplish so much more if we united and addressed key root causes. See also: “We see only trees” above.

### **We are too ‘comfortable’**

“Comfort is the enemy of progress” – PT Barnum




# The DoD Times (Redacted)



We see the threats, but the risk of standing up against them is too high, in our eyes. We want to see change, but we also like our GS-14 job, or our future defense contractor job in the MIC (see “MIC” below), or or or.... One may begin to ask, even, “if we don’t assume risk to incite change, is the change *really* needed?”

## We confuse identifying as a victim with being an advocate

At some point in our trauma journeys, we need to move on from calling ourselves victims – people don’t want to hear our sob stories *ad infinitum* and our constant “woe is me” tales don’t further our cause; they actually work against it, in fact. Here, a contentious quote from Adam Grant on this very phenomenon:



**Adam Grant** ✓  
@AdamMGrant

Constantly claiming to be a victim is not a sign of virtue. It's a strategy for narcissists and psychopaths to get ahead.

Data: people who regularly signal victimhood are more willing to lie, cheat, and steal.

Beware those who air personal grievances like every day is Festivus.

## We confuse inaction with action

Terms like “raising awareness” or “advising” – these are not *action* verbs. To advise others (which many times really means to have them accept the risk and not us) serves two ends: averting personal risk for ourselves, and, fooling our consciousness into thinking we actually *did* something.

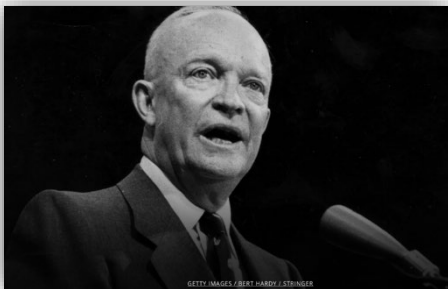
## We cling onto false hopes (and deities)

Long gone are the days when our two great saviors – Congress and the press – could influence substantive change (and/or accountability). But we keep going there hoping that this time things will be different. They won’t be. What was that famous definition of insanity again?

## We think that accountability = reform

While accountability (the new PC term for many who really seek *vengeance*) is an important first step, it, in and of itself, is not reform. And in that vein, “accountability” should not be our final destination on the journey to bringing about substantive change.

## And finally...We have yet to shoot the elephant in the room: our Great American MIC



“This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience...Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications...In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex {MIC}. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.”  
– [Eisenhower’s farewell address, 1961](#)

Could he have been more correct? The American Military Industrial Complex (MIC) now shapes so much of the direction of our military and nation. Why is our Legislative branch so impotent nowadays when tasked with confronting the DoD and its brazen disregard for the laws of our nation and our Constitution? Why are Representatives so hell-bent on getting that new boat or plane or tank in the NDAA? Why do Services say, “people are our most valuable resource” and then watch as they kill themselves at alarming rates? Much, if not all, of it goes back to the MIC; the insatiable industry which needs to be fed...constantly. You don’t satiate it by reforming the Inspector General system, or addressing mold-ridden housing, or getting people to stop harassing and assaulting each other. You feed it by pumping trillions of tax dollars into it. You keep it alive with war after pointless and fruitless war. You don’t get big votes and big lobby \$\$\$ by calling the DoD out on



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their lies and their bullshit; you get it by being in bed with them. You want to talk about root causes, the MIC is *numero uno*, my friends.

If you feel that you have been a victim of these types of concerns, feel free to reach out privately at [francescagraham@walkthetalkfoundation.org](mailto:francescagraham@walkthetalkfoundation.org), or share your story in the comments.

### PETITIONS:

1. [SIGN THIS PETITION](#) urging the Supreme Court of the United States to hear the case of Staff Sergeant Ryan Carter who was paralyzed from the chest down following a routine surgery at Walter Reed.
2. [SIGN THIS PETITION](#) demanding that our leaders in Congress change the DoD's unjust administrative investigatory system.
3. [SIGN THIS PETITION](#) demanding real anti-harassment reform in the Military and Coast Guard now.

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