

## PREPARING TO RESPOND TO COMMON RATIONALIZATIONS JOB AID

The following are potential rationalizations you may hear when having conversations about counterproductive leadership behaviors. The potential responses column contains ways you can “rebut” these rationalizations. It can be useful as well when rebutting rationalizations to provide realistic alternatives that represent a more positive and appropriate method to achieve their goals. You will need to tailor those responses to your situation and based on your power relationship; some responses may be more appropriate for a superior addressing a subordinate than for the opposite.

Rationalization	Potential Response (that you can tailor to your situation)
<b>“But I’ve been getting results! Have you seen how well we did on the recent training exercise?”</b>	“Results are important but so is how we attain results. You may be unaware that some of us have been (insert counterproductive leadership behavior effects). While we are exceeding in the training exercise, we are declining in (XYZ).”
<b>“I’m just holding people to standard.”</b>	“I appreciate you holding our Soldiers to standard. I think the unit is starting to question whether you care about anything other than standards; they feel like they’re constantly getting beat down for what they did wrong, without any feedback on the hard work they’re putting in to achieve our mission.”
<b>“I’m just intense and passionate.”</b>	“Your intensity and passion are good things, but they come off as anger and micromanagement.”
<b>“My subordinates just confuse accountability with aggressiveness.”</b>	“I understand your desire to hold your Soldiers accountable. What other ways are there to attain that end goal that do not result in your subordinates feeling like you’re attacking them?”
<b>“I’m just being frank and honest.”</b>	“Those are good qualities! Remember to consider the recipients’ perspective when you give feedback. Sometimes frankness and honesty hurt feelings to the point that our performance declines. Frank and honest feedback that is perceived as criticism and name-calling will not be as well received as constructive feedback.”
<b>“Just doing my job.”</b>	“You’re great at your job! And I understand you’re trying to accomplish the mission, but sometimes it seems as if that is the only thing you care about...as if we, the Soldiers, don’t matter.”
<b>“I’m just trying to get all I can out of my Soldiers.”</b>	“High standards and demanding excellence are good things, but sometimes it feels like you don’t think we can ever live up to your expectations. Sometimes your comments are more discouraging than motivating to us.”