

My Boss Is A Bully.....HELP!

As children we had to contend with the “bully” on the playground, surrendering our lunch money, hiding out in a quiet corner to avoid confrontation, or standing up to the bully and risking humiliation of a black eye in front of our peers.

Now we are mature adults, we’ve left our childhood dramas back on the playground...

Have we really? Has that playground bully now become your boss? Are you now surrendering your self esteem and feelings of value? Do you feel unable to perform your job to the best of your ability?

If your boss is indeed a “bully” you can simply ignore them, confront them, or report them to their boss. This is a sticky situation because you like your job, the money is good, benefits are great and you have good working relationships with your co-workers. Please beware the bully usually wins! Statistics provided by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health indicates that 70% of targets lose their jobs, 33% leave voluntarily for health reasons and 36% are constructively discharged.

The best defense from a bully in any situation is don’t become a target. Sound easy to say? Well perhaps it is but the fact remains bullies will pick on nice people. They throw their attitude out there and test to see if you thrown off balance and become flustered. If you are weak the bully owns you...lock, stock, and barrel. If this is all too discouraging then you need to do a self analysis. Let’s go back to the playground scenario, were you the one running and hiding? Did your mom and/or dad tell you to stand up and risk that black eye or be prepared to run the rest of your life? There is only one thing a bully respects and that is one who will not be bullied!

Gary Namie, director of the “Workplace Bullying and Trauma Institute, states that stress costs North American companies between \$150,000 and \$200,000, per case, and that 60% of all disability claims are stress related.

Types of Bullies

Type A: Continual Critic –extremely negative person can also be viewed as a nitpicker, perfectionist, whiner, or constant fault-finder. This bully masks insecurity for public boldness.

Type B: Two-faced Snake in the Grass-dishonest style of dealing with people. This bully pretends to be nice while sabotaging behind closed doors. They will criticize you to others and in many take credit for the work of others.

Type C: Guard of the Gateway-the ultimate and most transparent, the control freak. This bully attempts to control all resources—time, supplies, praise, approval, money, and staffing.

Type D: Office Shouter-controls the office through fear and intimidation. This bully is emotionally out of control, impulsive, and overbearing-worried about being detected as an imposter.

In conclusion readers should not confuse the boss who has a strong personality, who expects the highest level of performance and professionalism from everyone as a bully. The bully usually has targets, their behavior is not consistent. It is important to know the difference. Equally important before writing one off as a bully, examine if criticism is warranted, is there just a few isolated incidents or is this common place behavior.

If you suspect you work for a bully, if you do tend to see yourself as a bully or if you suspect you have a bully heading up part of your team ... take action, help is available!

Bullies cost businesses either through employment lawsuits or health costs; training for management is available. Many managers especially in small companies simply are managing as they have been managed or managing as they perceive a manager should manage.

Lynn K. Edington *for*
Unlimited Resolutions Mediation, Inc.