



Bullying in the Workplace

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This is not a new topic, being probably as old as we have had workplaces. However it shows no sign of abating, especially not with the stresses and strains in the workplace today.

Consider the following below. Which are true for you?

1. The prospect of having to go to work makes you feel physically ill.
2. At work you are exposed to constant criticism.
3. At work you are yelled at, screamed at, humiliated and insulted in front of others.
4. Your mistakes are constantly remembered and referred to for no reason.
5. You are falsely accused of making errors.
6. In the workplace lots of gossip and lies is spread about you.
7. You are not invited to meetings or lunches that you should be attending.
8. You are singled out or isolated in the workplace.
9. You are always being told that you could lose your job.
10. Others sabotage you – for example deadlines are changed without informing you, or rules and procedures are changed and you are not told.
11. You are given impossible schedules and no discussion is entertained. You are told, "I don't care how you do it, just get it done."
12. Your work is taken and passed off by others as their own.

If you work with others at some point you are likely to be bullied. The bully usually is the boss, but can be a colleague or even a subordinate. I have had clients bullied by subordinates.

So what do you do if you are being bullied

- Talk to someone you trust and who is caring. Bullies mess with your head. You wonder if there is something wrong with you. So chat with someone about what is going on to get another and potentially clearer perspective as to what is going on.

- Write down on paper – that is document the incident, the time and the place. Write down what was said and done.
- Check your workplace policies and procedures on bullying and any other relevant topics.
- The most mature way to deal with anyone you have a problem with is to approach them and have an adult conversation and sort out the problem. That however, is often not likely to work. Nevertheless, unless doing so would be dangerous I would recommend you do this because often when you resort to other measures the parties want to know if you have tried to sort this out with the person/bully.
- If speaking to the bullying party doesn't work then report it to someone else in the workplace – either another manager or HR
- If you have a mentor discuss solutions with your mentor.
- Many companies have a grievance procedure, and if there is no better way then make use of the grievance procedure.
- Make sure you have other people (family and friends) to support you. This is hard and painful. You will need the support of others.
- If you are not able to sort the problem out and it looks like the bully will be around for a long time you need to consider a transfer to another department or finding another job elsewhere.

Do not stay and do nothing in an environment where you are being bullied. The psychological costs are too great. Every day that goes by sees your self-esteem, your confidence, your creativity, and most likely your productivity drop. Then there is also the impact on your health.



Being in a situation in which you are being bullied is hell. The thought of having to deal with the bully, is an additional hell which some people just decide they cannot face. However it is possible to do something about it. For the most part workplace bullying is not condoned. So do yourself a favour and do something about it. Whatever happens you will grow as a person in strength and character.