Are Workplace Bullies Sabotaging Your Ability to Compete?

Learn to identify and extinguish problem behavior

By John E. Richardson, DMin, MBA and Linnea B. McCord, JD, MBA,

Innovation, performance, and healthy communication flourish in a “bully-free” environment.

To succeed in this economic environment, organizations must be able to inspire all levels of employees to be innovative or risk being overtaken by more nimble and creative competitors. In a hyper-competitive global economy, where competition is no longer limited by geography or industry, new formidable competitors can arise seemingly overnight.[1] In such an environment, one of the surest ways for an organization to fail is to tolerate workplace bullying. Bullies not only stifle productivity and innovation throughout the organization, they most often target an organization’s best employees, because it is precisely those employees who are the most threatening to bullies. As a result, enterprises are robbed of their most important asset in today’s competitive economic environment – precious human capital.

The problem with workplace bullying is that many bullies are hard to identify because they operate surreptitiously under the guise of being civil and cooperative. Although workplace bullying is being discussed more than ever before, and there may eventually be specific legislation outlawing such behavior, organizations cannot afford to wait for new laws to eradicate the bullies in their midst. In order to survive, organizations must root out workplace bullying before it squelches their employees’ creativity and productivity, or even drives out their best employees, thus fatally impacting an organization’s ability to compete in this new era. The purpose of this article is to review current research on workplace bullying, to help organizations learn how to identify bullies, and to suggest ways that an organization can eliminate this workplace toxin.

How to Identify Bullying Behavior

Recent commentators have used different ways to describe bullying behavior, but they agree that a bully is only interested in maintaining his or her power and control.[2] Because bullies are cowards and are driven by deep-seated insecurities and fears of inadequacy, they intentionally wage a covert war against an organization’s best employees – those who are highly-skilled, intelligent, creative, ethical, able to work well with others, and independent (who refuse to be subservient or controlled by others).[3] Bullies can act alone or in groups.[4] Bullying behavior can exist at any level of an organization. Bullies can be superiors, subordinates, co-workers and colleagues.[5]

Some bullies are obvious – they throw things, slam doors, engage in angry tirades, and are insulting and rude. Others, however, are much more subtle. While appearing to be acting reasonably and courteously on the surface, in reality they are engaging in vicious and fabricated character assassination, petty humiliations and small interferences, any one of which might be insignificant in itself, but taken together over a period of time, poison the working environment for the targeted individuals.[6]
Bullying is not about being “tough” or insisting on high standards.[7] It is “abusive disrespect.”[8] In Dr. Hornstein’s view bullies fall into 3 types:

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<th>Characteristics</th>
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<td><strong>Conquerors</strong></td>
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<td>Only interested in power and control and protecting their turf. They try to make others feel less powerful. Can act DIRECTLY (e.g. insulting and/or rude words or gestures, or tones) or INDIRECTLY (e.g. orchestrating battles and watching others disembowel each other).</td>
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<td><strong>Performers</strong></td>
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<td>Suffer from low self-esteem so belittle targeted persons (can be obvious or subtle put-downs).</td>
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<td><strong>Manipulators</strong></td>
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<td>Interested only in themselves. Easily threatened and vindictive. Experts at lying, deceiving and betraying. Take credit for the work of others. Never take responsibility for their own “errors.”</td>
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*Source: Dr. Harvey Hornstein; Brutal Bosses and Their Prey: How to Identify and Overcome Abuse in the Workplace.*[9]

Bullying is not about a “clash of personalities,” a “misunderstanding,” or “miscommunication.”[10] According to two psychologists who have conducted surveys on bullying, (1) bullies use surprise and secrecy to gain leverage over those targeted,[11] (2) they are never interested in meeting someone else halfway so trying to negotiate with a bully is useless,[12] (3) they routinely practice psychological violence against specific individuals whom they intentionally try to harm which is devastating to the targeted person’s emotional stability “and can last a long time.”[13] According to the Namies, this psychological violence can take many forms:

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<td><strong>The Constant Critic</strong></td>
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<td>“[P]ut-downs, insults, belittling comments, name-calling.” Constantly criticizes the targeted person’s competence. Glares at the targeted person or deliberately avoids eye contact when the targeted person speaks. “[N]egatively reacts to the targeted person’s contributions with sighs, frowns or the “just sucked a lemon look.” “[B]lames the targeted person for fabricated errors.” “Makes unreasonable demands for work with impossible deadlines.”</td>
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<td><strong>The Two-Headed Snake</strong></td>
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<td>Pretends to be nice while sabotaging the targeted person – one minute vicious, the next minute supportive and encouraging. Ensures that the targeted person doesn’t have the necessary resources to do the work. Makes nasty, rude or hostile remarks to the targeted person privately; puts on friendly face in public. Steals credit for work done by the targeted person. Says one thing to the targeted person and something completely different behind the targeted person’s back. Will “kiss up the ladder and attack those below.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Gatekeeper</strong></td>
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<td>Purposefully cuts the targeted person out of the communication loop. Ignores the targeted individual or gives that person the “silent treatment.” Models isolation or exclusion of the targeted person for others.</td>
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The Screaming Mimi

- Poisons the workplace with angry outbursts.
- Intimidates through gestures.
- Purposefully interrupts the targeted person during meetings and conversations.
- Discounts/denies the targeted person’s thoughts or feelings.

Source: Gary and Ruth Namie; The Bully at Work: What You Can Do to Stop the Hurt and Reclaim Your Dignity on the Job.[14]

According to the Namie’s research: (1) “Bullies are inadequate, defective and poorly developed people. Targets are empathetic, just and fair people,”[15] (2) “Bullies start all conflict and trouble. Targets react.”[16] (3) “Targets don’t deserve or want what they get. Bullies are liars and cowards,”[17] and (4) “Good employers purge bullies. Bad ones promote them.”[18]

**Identifying “Group Bullying” Behavior: “Mobbing”**

Mobbing[19] (group bullying) occurs where one bully, “[t]hrough innuendo, rumors, and public discrediting”..., creates a hostile environment for the targeted person and, “gathers others to willingly, or unwillingly, participate in continuous malevolent actions to force a person out of [a job or] the workplace.”[20] When the mobbing behavior finally does result in resignation, termination, or early retirement from a job or the workplace, the targeted person is portrayed as being at fault and “voluntarily” leaving.[21] Mobbing in an organization is like cancer in that, “beginning with one malignant cell, it can spread quickly, destroying vital elements of the organization.”[22]

**Bullying Results in Real Physical and Emotional Injury**

All of the authors agree that bullying behavior leads to real and serious physical and emotional problems for the individuals they target, including but not limited to damage to their self-esteem and confidence, anxiety, depression, gastrointestinal disorders, headaches, insomnia, exhaustion, poor concentration, and substance abuse.[23]

**How to Eliminate Bullies From Your Organization**

Since bullies are often skilled at hiding their actions behind a veil of overt friendliness, helpfulness and cooperation, organizations must establish processes and procedures to uncover their actions. An accidental bully, when confronted with his or her behavior, will quickly apologize and the behavior never happens again.[24] An intentional bully denies that the behavior is occurring and continues to repeat it.[25]

Bullies are driven by their own fears and insecurities, therefore they rarely can be cured, but their behavior can be controlled or eradicated. Eradicating bullying behavior from an organization starts at the top because it is the head of any organization that sets the tone for whether bullying behavior will be accepted.[26] An organization reflects the values, attitudes, and actions of its leadership. Leaders who ignore, or otherwise allow, these destructive behavior patterns to occur, are eroding the health of their organizations and opening the door for some of their best talent to escape from this upsetting and counterproductive environment.

To eradicate bullying, employers should:

1. Establish an anti-bullying policy[27] defining what bullying is and giving some common sense descriptions of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors at work. Included in such a policy should be a statement that the organization supports the right of all employees to work in an
environment free from bullying. This will give targeted individuals a context and a constructive way to confront the bullying tactics.

2. Conduct climate surveys[28] to uncover bullying behavior, provided that these surveys are sent to a neutral-third party for review and confidentiality is guaranteed. Unless this is done, respondents will not feel free to express their true feelings.

3. Establish reporting, investigation and mediation processes, guaranteeing those who avail themselves of these processes that there will be no retaliation against them.[29] Because bullying is often duplicitious and slippery to detect, it can be risky for others to complain. This is especially true when bullying has become part of an organizational culture. Rather than fight the “mob,” many talented people move on to a healthier workplace. Therefore, a clear statement and enforcement of an anti-retaliation policy is essential.

4. Train all employees to ensure that everyone is aware of his and her responsibility to conduct themselves in a professional, civil, and businesslike manner.[30] Top management reinforcement of the “zero-tolerance for bullying behavior” at new employee orientation sessions can help. Employees should be taught how to recognize the first signs of the bullying/mobbing process.[31]

Current Legal Protections Against Bullying

The American legal system has been hesitant to legislate manners or civility in the workplace (outside of the civil rights laws) but this attitude might soon change because of the new requirements for success in a hyper-competitive global economy.[32] As the problem becomes more recognized and acknowledged, legal remedies will no doubt be found.[33] They may take the form of new laws directly addressing the issue, perhaps through the inclusion of those who are bullied as a protected class under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This has been the preferred avenue in the past for workers seeking relief for discrimination-related unfavorable treatment in the workplace. This Act, among other things, permits relief for protected classes based on a “hostile work environment” theory. A “hostile work environment” means the workplace is permeated with “discriminatory intimidation, ridicule, and insult” so severe or pervasive “that it alter(s) the conditions of the victim’s employment and create(s) an abusive working environment.”[34]

Even under current law, employers should be especially vigilant to make sure that individuals targeted by the bullies are not members of protected classes who might be able to establish claims against the employer under existing discrimination laws. Federal courts have not yet extended the hostile workplace doctrine to prohibit workplace bullying conduct based on characteristics other than those specifically enumerated in Title VII, but history suggests that there will be an expansion of protection to those who suffer this type of workplace harassment.[35]

In the meantime, the preferred avenue for workers seeking relief for abusive treatment in the workplace has been the state common law tort claim of intentional infliction of emotional distress. Although currently such workplace-related claims might be difficult to win, those who practice, condone, or accept bullying behavior should not take much comfort in that. After all, the tobacco companies were able to successfully defend themselves against claims for years until the tide recently turned, resulting in numerous and staggering multi-billion dollar verdicts against the tobacco companies.

At a minimum, the bullies themselves could be sued individually for their own intentional tortious conduct. An employer would be liable for the intentional tortious acts of its employees if it knows of the bad acts and takes no action to terminate those acts or discipline the employee who is committing those bad acts. Punitive damages are available for tortious acts committed maliciously or oppressively.
However, the issue of bullying should not be addressed simply as a way to avoid lawsuits or other negative reactions. Creating a “bully-free” environment is a proactive step that should be taken to improve the company’s strategic position in today’s highly-competitive global economy. By creating a “bully-free” environment, an organization can create a culture of respect in which innovation, performance, and healthy communication can flourish. To become a top performer in any industry, an organization must be able to recognize and rid itself of this performance and talent-robbing behavior or risk losing their single most important competitive asset – their talented employees. Eradicating bullying is not “nice to do,” it’s a “must do.” The survival of the organization in the 21st century depends on it.

Endnotes


[5] Id.

[6] *The Bully at Work*, supra note 2, at 3-4. “Unchecked...bullying quickly escalates into a hostile, poisoned workplace where everyone suffers. If ignored long enough, the entire organization is placed at risk, facing preventable trauma or litigation.” Id. at 4; Mobbing, supra note 3, at 20.


[8] Id. at 4.

[9] Id. at 50-60.

[10] *The Bully at Work*, supra note 2 at p. 73.

[11] Id. at xi.

[12] Id. If allowed to continue, the targeted person’s personality “gets trampled, bent out of recognition even” to the targeted person. Id. at 5.

[13] Id. at 5.

[14] Id. at 19-33. This is not an exhaustive list – only some examples of bullying behavior. Id.

[15] Id. at 14.

[16] Id. at 18.
[17] Id. at 5.

[18] Id. at 33.

[19] Id at 20. “….Co-workers, colleagues, superiors and subordinates attack their dignity, integrity and competence, repeatedly, over a number of weeks, months, or years. At the end, they resign, voluntarily or involuntarily, are terminated, or forced into early retirement. This is mobbing—workplace expulsion through emotional abuse.” Id. “Because the organization ignores, condones or even instigates the behavior, it can be said that the victim, seemingly helpless against the powerful and many, is indeed “mobbed”. The result is always injury – physical and mental distress or illness and social misery and, most often, expulsion from the workplace.” Id. at 40.

[20] Id. at 33. Mobbing is a household word in some European countries. Laws against mobbing behavior have been enacted in Sweden, Norway, Finland and Germany and have been proposed in the UK and Australia. Id. at 26-27.

[21] Mobbing, supra note 3, at 41. The hallmark of mobbing behavior is an initial unresolved conflict that is preventing the targeted person from accomplishing his or her job in the most effective way. The targeted person tries with good intent to resolve the situation in a constructive way, never realizing that the people he or she is dealing with have already decided to get rid of him or her, which is “revealed in attacks of various sorts: humiliation, ridicule, stigmatization, ostracism, exclusion and isolation.” Id. at 159. This leads the targeted person to suffer “self-doubt,” “…confusion, tension, anger and depression.” Id. These unresolved conflicts intensify and are magnified until the targeted person is suffering severe emotional distress. The more the targeted person attempts to find recourse the more those who are doing the mobbing create reasons why the issue cannot be resolved. Id. at 160. Because those doing the mobbing have no intention of resolving the conflict, the conflict escalates until it is virtually unmanageable. The targeted person becomes very ill or depressed, work suffers and it is only a matter of time before the targeted person is terminated, resigns or retires. Id. The expulsion of the targeted person was predetermined by those doing the mobbing from the very start and there was nothing the targeted person could have done to resolve the issue (therein lies the “crazy-making”). Id. at 159.

[22] Id. at 34.

[23] See, The Bully at Work, pp. 60-61, Mobbing, pp. 90-95, Brutal Bosses and Their Prey, pp. 74-77, for a more comprehensive list of physical and emotional consequences for the targeted person.


[26] Id. at 132.


[28] Id. at 155.

[29] Id. at p. 142.

[30] Id. at p. 143.

[31] Id.
I've watched my manager get bullied at work by her supervisor to the point that I once made a statement to her that she has the Abusive Wife Syndrome in the workplace. Shortly after she resigned, the supervisor hired a friend in her place and now I am the target of harassment. Well needless to say, because I have a strong will not to become submissive to the supervisor, he delegated his newly hired manager/friend to “let me go”. I am looking to bring about a lawsuit against this Golf Course. The areas that fit my profile are the fact that I am a woman working at a golf course and needless to say, the only Black to grace it’s property.

I really enjoyed reading your informative article, and it gave me hope for a more positive workplace experience in the future, especially since people are finally looking at this issue and relating it to the fact that bullying will make their companies less successful. I have often been the target of workplace bullying and harassment, and usually its just one or two people, even though I feel like I get along well with the


[34] Harris v. Forklift Systems, Inc., 510 U.S. at 22.; see also Rogers v. EEOC, 454 F.2d 234 (5th Circuit 1971).

[35] Mobbing, supra note 3, at 21 citing work by Dr. Carroll Brodsky who defined harassment as “behavior that ‘involves repeated and persistent attempts by one person to torment, wear down, frustrate, or get a reaction from another. It is behavior that persistently provokes, pressures, frightens, intimidates…” Id. at 22.

About the Author(s)

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Linnea B. McCord, JD, MBA, Associate Professor of Business Law at the Graziadio School of Business and Management, Pepperdine University. Dr. McCord started teaching business law and ethics more than 30 years ago, first as an in-house corporate counsel and later as the General Counsel of a division that was part of a high-tech Fortune 500 multinational corporation, headquartered in New York and Paris. Her area of expertise is the critical role Rule of Law plays in the long-term success of economies and countries and why American Rule of Law is unique in the world.

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Comments

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rest. I was never sure why I was the target, but in each case I can see where my smarts and education, all things the bully did not have as I did, could have threatened someone higher up, even though I had no desire or position to take their job away. I found this article, and I think so many people believe that rude, mean bullying people make good bosses. It is so wrong and outdated, and yet so many workplaces still adhere to these old ways of doing things. Good luck with your crusade, and please publish a list of workplaces who will not tolerate bullying. I will be in line to apply:

Study: Rudeness Pays Off, Literally, in the Workplace
By: Megan Gibson


I read your paper (and the White Paper that was based in part on your work) about bullies and I realized that my neighbors have been bullying me. It gave me great comfort because until I read this article, I have been wondering of late—is it me? Have I had a psychotic break? Amnesia? Did I DO something to these people? While comforting to know that “it’s THEM, it’s not me,” I am wondering how successful a law suit for infliction of emotional distress would be considering that I am not “losing my job,” just thinking that maybe I have “lost my mind” cuz this just CANNOT be happening to me! By the way, my neighbors fit your profile to a T, and they engage in all the behaviors you mention in the article, except those specifically work related….and, sadly, I fit the “target” description to a T, and if I am in the paper for an accomplishment, it’s “open season” on me with bullying behavior.

I am experiencing this right now, at my job and I need help.

Our accounting firm was taken over by a national company and things have really changed for the worse. I have been bullied by the management team, the human resource director and partners. The staff who works so hard and very long hours during tax season is so depressed. The managers micromanage and if there was some legal recourse, I would take legal action. There is no transparencies in our annual reviews so the managers can say anything they want and when you ask for proof or detail, the human resource person just says that we can’t really give any further information out. I don’t trust anyone at work anymore. One of the things that victims of bullies need is someone to go to for help. Thanks for the article, I hope that change will come about and companies will establish an Anti Bullying policy.

Trackbacks
1. Spotting the bully before you hire them – a role for human resources. | Workplace on the Edge
2. Spot the workplace bully before you hire them - Workplace on the Edge
I was a victim of workplace bullying, the consequences of which have been devastating. Although it has been over 2 years since I was in that position I still cannot even think about the events without crying. I was a standout employee, promoted from entry level to management in just a little over a year's time. Within the next 2 years I worked diligently and enjoyed tremendous success. My efforts were rewarded with another promotion, this time placing me in a position of responsibility far above my management colleagues, all of which had worked at their positions for years longer than I. Although the bullying had begun with my first promotion it had been fairly low-key, and tolerable. With the second advancement it intensified. Attacks were less subtle and more frequent. I was, nonetheless, effective in my position albeit I had to find creative ways to work around the bully. When our director of operations was offered the opportunity to head up another office (there were 3 locations in the United States, and 1 overseas) I was offered the director of operations position. This is when the bullying became truly horrific. Although my attacker had a couple of cheerleaders in the background he had basically acted alone until this point. It became common knowledge that I would be taking the helm of the office (due to my boss spilling the beans) but no official announcement had been made. This left me extremely vulnerable and, I believe, caused my bullier to panic. The abuse became nearly constant and much more overt. He started rumors about me, he organized small socializing events, on and off the clock, from which I was excluded. He overly animated in greeting all the managers will pointedly ignoring me. As our IT manager it was his job to address all technological needs throughout the office however, my work requests were ignored. I would send emails and IM’s all of which would go unanswered. I could only illicit a response when, after repeated efforts to reach him, I would resend my original email (showing that it was sent days, sometimes weeks, prior) and copy the director. He slammed his chair into me as I was walking behind him, causing me to be pushed into a wall. If I was speaking to someone out on the floor he would go out of his way to walk over and interrupt me. He once stared at me (directly and intentionally-without moving) from across the room for a full 15 minutes. He tried several times to sabotage projects under my supervision. And the list goes on. I attempted to resolve this on my own by talking directly with him. When that was ineffective, I met with the director and voiced my complaints/concerns. I repeatedly urged my supervisor to intervene. I practically begged for help. I was told that it is natural for those moving up to experience animosity from others in the workplace. I tried several times to make him understand this was not normal “sour grapes” all to no avail. My bullier kept his abuse below the surface, in front of others he presented a congenial attitude. This meant that I seemed like the person with the problem and I was even taken to task for it. I felt like I was going crazy, truly. I am a recovering addict and he knew this so he began to circulate rumors of drug use. He enlisted the aid of another employee and the 2 of them concocted a story about me using
drugs that was so unbeleivable I can only shake my head at it. When they took these lies to my boss, I was nearly at my wits end. I denied their accusations and my boss did not doubt me. However, I was not satisfied with his assurances that he believed me and I wanted to expose make sure there was no room for anyone to even wonder. I immediately asked that I be allowed to take a drug test. One of the suites in our building happened to be leased by an alcohol/drug counselor. He performed drug urinalysis and we had even used him for the occassional random testing we required of employees. I walked directly to the suite and submitted at once to a drug test. The test (dip type) was inconclusive and so the sample was sent to a lab. For entire week I waited for the results all the while being the subject of everyones conversations. I had been declared guilty. They smelled blood in the water. My authority was now openly questioned, the respect I had earned from my employees vaporized, the promotion (for which a start date and salary had already been negotiated) was now being discussed as a “possibility sometime, maybe” in the future. When the lab results came back Negative for any trace of chemical substance, it was too late. The damge was done. I tried desperately to piece it back together but it was like trying to hold water in your hand. The stress was incredible. I cried every day. Relationships outside fo work felt the strain and began to deteriorate. Eventually, I relapsed. After 7 years clean and sober I found myself back in the throes of addiction. I couldn’t ask for help. I couldn’t even think. It is as if I became emotionally paralyzed from the ordeal. I was arrested 3 short months into my relapse. I lost my house, my car, my savings. Everything I had worked so hard for was just…gone. I am still trying to piece my life back together but it feels impossible. I was always an ambitious person but now, I can’t even bring myself to go look for a job. I am terrified, absolutely terrified of the possibility of going through anything like that again. I can’t sleep, I cry alot and feel anxious all the time. I am trying to forget it and move on but my mind replays the events without my even directing it to. I am 42 and live in tiny run-down one bedroom apartment with my 2 sons. I just look around am confused at how I got here. Also the office where I worked had no suitable candidates to take the director of operations position that was to be mine. The CEO opted not to promote someone and train them and instead closed the office completely. About 150 good people lost their jobs. I feel responsible and wish I could have handled things better but I also, I logically know that I didn’t just fall down, I was beaten down.

I have been the subject of work mobbing/bulling goin on a few years now. Because I brought inappropriate behavior the the attention of my team lead I was threatened by these individuals that they would “ruin” me. They have since set out to actively humiliate and commit character assassination against me. The outside techs that I work with have intentionally been told stories so that I am embarrassed to the point that these individuals hope I quit. I have strangers walk by my desk and openly laugh at me. I have outside techs that have had a
good relationship with me only to find that their behaviour changes toward me after the mobbers do their intentional damage. I did not know for a long while what was going on, but now am sadly aware. Your quote “Others, however, are much more subtle. While appearing to be acting reasonably and courteously on the surface, in reality they are engaging in vicious and fabricated character assassination, petty humiliations and small interferences, any one of which might be insignificant in itself, but taken together over a period of time, poison the working environment for the targeted individuals.[6]” is very fitting to my situation. It take every once of energy to come here to work in this environment and is making me sick. What's worse is all of the “secret witnesses” that don’t stand up to the situation. I have currently been told of certain discrediting innuendoes that have be stated about me, even to management supposedly, that I am at a complete lost and sick to my stomach over it all. This is wrong and I do not deserve this treatment.

I am being and have been bullyed for awhile now, you see my employers are spreading rumors that I am gay/homosexual. These lies are very hurtful, they have cost me to be the target of hate groups. I am looking for a legal way to fight back. Please help!!!

I would like to say that I have been the target of mob tag team bullying for over 10 years at my place of employment and it does not get easier. I have been working here for 37yrs.....and suffer greatly. The perpetrators take turns and poison management at every turn. They dictate my work falsely saying I am causing dissent in the group which is not true but some how it works for them. I am deeply tired of it but do not believe my company will ever help fix things. I am sad to hear the stories of others because I understand completely. God Bless you who have to go through this HATE. It is what it is. Patricia

Good luck with your organization getting behind you to stamp on the bully’s behaviour in the workplace. Mine tried and did portray me, the target, as mentally ill. This was a way of abdicating and denying responsibility for the psychological injury. The people I was dealing with couldn’t see that the state of my decreased physical and mental wellbeing was a direct consequence of the bully’s behaviour toward me over the past 6 months.

There were several things that forced a change in thinking:-
1. I had documented all of the events privately AND with my doctor.
2. I have bystanders who were prepared to make witness statements
3. I had a support team of colleagues who were in the same boat – talking with them is fantastic. You do not feel alone.
4. We used the official complaint process for each incident to prove history & organizational responses which could be used in legal proceedings e.g. worker’s compensation
5. The union’s industrial officer was invaluable in guiding me through the legal maze
6. Somehow, finding the inner strength to keep going when the system seemed to do you over again.

I did not know that I was being bullied until God showed me as a thought the word “sabotage” then I landed on your site. It really hurts causing depression and anxiety to be a victim of bullying and mobbing in a workplace. I have been avoiding going to work booking as off sick and my days have been exhausted. I have applied for a job and praying to God that He gives me that job so I can get away from those people. I have have even thought of putting a 24 hour notice. Bullies are demon possessed people just like their father Satan. Since I know that they r bullies I will not let them get away with it. I’m going to face them, if it means they feel I’m mean then it will be like that. I know God will help me. They have taken advantage of me.

Although. Everything written here is true. What happens when their is only one target with a supported management behind it. Or when moving from job to job as I have in the Past 7 years. Emails, family and friends numbers And stalking from job to job. After many years Of anxiety attacks and depression. This sort of Behavior at work places developed into PTSD.

What gives with these people. They enjoy turning things Around on you. But, I have now developed a knack on Catching this epidemic. It’s wrong and it is ruining The very fabric of this nation. The hard working Americans.

Oh my god. This is EXACTLY what is happening to me and I see the course playing out as it is described here. In once instance (of many, many, many instances of bullying), I was physically intimidated by a ‘colleague’ in front of the institution visitors and it was caught on camera. I went to HR, the colleague was given only a written warning. He was not suspended, fired nor asked to write a letter of apology. This has only served to give him license to continue the bullying at an accelerated rate and it is turning into the mobbing described above by ‘superiors’ and the people I supervise. I’ve worked with these people for almost 10 years and it wasn’t until I was promoted to a supervisory position that this started….before then these same people for 8 years thought I was smart, hard working, intelligent, and did a great job at work. It is becoming increasingly difficult for me to handle and I now know that I do not have recourse from the institution. What recourse do people like me have? I feel like I have no where to turn.
It should not surprise anyone that some people cannot handle their own lives and will always look for someone to blame. However the idea that civil behavior can, or should, be codified and imposed on business is simply unacceptable. Not everyone is a “fit” in their job, but this should not become an imposition for the employer to make it a fit. Nor it should not be the responsibility of an employer to monitor particular types of behavior toward particular groups, because the net effect would be to further isolate those very groups from the mainstream. Since when is it governments role to legislate social correctness anyway? There are laws aplenty which protect people in the workplace. I for one would not want yet another layer of “protection.”

You nailed it! I saw all these characteristics and forms…..while working at Pepperdine! Mike speaks of an employer’s responsibility. I agree with him as far as legal requirements go (and they go too far). but as a manager, I will try to root out and fire employees who lack effective team spirit. Some competition within ranks can be helpful. But if it gets cut-throat, it can diminish productivity. I don’t want an effective game-player to scare off an effective worker.

I confronted the bully I dealt with. Our school was closed but I sent her an email. It was cathartic to send it to her. I don’t expect her to change herself, but as a result of my enduring her for two years, I have vowed to confront these people immediately. I will not let anybody pull the crap that this woman did for two years.

If you have struggled with a workplace bully, perhaps you’ll feel some sense of satisfaction from my email to a bully…

On second thought, I really think I should close by telling you, Yvonne, that you were a nightmare to work with for two years. You were always angling for power and domination. You were sneaky, a relentless kiss-ass, throwing yourself at the feet of every boss, desperately begging for breadcrumbs of power to hold over people.

Indeed, you walked through that place like you were Napoleon Bonaparte, barking orders to everyone. Just gallingly obnoxious and controlling and mannerless. A first year alternate route teacher who thought she owned the building and everybody in it. Everybody should listen to you? You should run every meeting? Hold individual meetings with people? Run a 90 minute weekly seminar on Tools for Teaching simply because you read that embarrassingly basic book? I mean, really, you have some severe delusions of grandeur.

You were a manipulator and a textbook workplace bully. As I told Lipski in our meeting, this describes you to a
T...http://gbr.pepperdine.edu/2010/08/are-workplace-bullies-sabotaging-your-ability-to-compete/

I believe you also have some severe case of Narcissistic Personality Disorder. Google that and see yourself.

You were jealous of me because I had more experience than you, the bosses were publicly praising me, the kids liked me and couldn’t stand you, and you just couldn’t take that. I was too much of a threat to your bulimic appetite for attention.

I’m glad I’ll never have to see or hear you again. Honestly, you’re one of the biggest assholes I have ever met in my life. And I really think you need some help.

Now I’m done. Get lost.

Good Riddance,

I dealt with workplace bullying for seven years. It started affecting my health, emotional and physical and no matter how hard I worked there were efforts to sabotage me. It got progressively worse when others joined in (mobbing). It was a small clikc of people. I then went to HR 3 times. They told me action would occur but never told me what. I told them that if necessary, I would pursue legal action. To this day, it still continues mostly by the one person who initiated it. The perpetrator grunts all the time when she walks by me. Refuses to get on the elevator when I am on it and stands in front of the door and stares as it closes. She always makes it known that she doesn’t like me or can stand to be in my presence. Recently, she slipped a couple of times. Her actions usually occur when we are alone, which I and others try to avoid. One guy on the elevator with me once saw her beavoir. She didn’t see him in the corner of the elevator… she just stood in front of the door and grunted. The guy said “she’s got serious issues”. Another time she mumbled “get out of my way” and grunted. She didn’t see the customer behind her and the lady behind her dropped her jaw in disbelief.

The greatest satifaction I had was in front of the commissioner who called the bahavoir of the City “pathetic”, which she repeated 3 times. I presume for not taking appropriate action. The bullying got so out of control that I had over 130 items.

It has been the oppinion of attorneys and other colleagues that this continued for so long because I raised issues of corruption and it was probably an effort to force me out. The person doing the bullying received a promotion and a $20,000 raise one year after it started. The job description required a minimum of a BS degree, Master’s degree preferable, with five years experience. She has an Associates Degree and was promoted from data entry clerk.
I have been with this new company for three months in a high-security area working with machines that copy and colate. It is extremely repetitive work and seems mundane at times but perfection is to the extreme ALWAYS. Within my first few days of work one of the managers told me privately that if I f him he would f me. I looked at him and laughed and said jokingly, just kiss me first before you f me. At the time I didn’t know if it was a sexual come on or if I was an immediate threat to his position. This stewed with me until a personal one on one meeting which I recalled the situation. He laughed at my initial thoughts of his words but we came to terms that I was not after his job and was not a slacker like some other people. The job doesn’t pay much so I really work for my money and more !!!!! NOW, at the task at hand, SABATEGE AT WORK EXCLUSIVE !!!!! I am much older that most people work but can do the do just like they do with a twist. I can cut up and joke around just like they do. But, I am excluded from the entire crew at all costs like a pariah. When lunch break comes, everyone is supposed to be out of the exclusive rooms, yet two managers and an exclusive one or two seem to have privvy to the rooms when no one else is around. This is when it gets scary. After lunch break and everybody comes back to thier machines, everyone is working steadfastly without problems, however, MY machine has certain breakdowns and errors that are impossible to clear without a manager to help because I, did I say I, don’t have the managerial codes for to clear and keep on running like everyone else. Also, one or two specialized papers for other jobs are mixed in the middle of regular papers associated to that particular job which makes that machine stop so ‘I’ can correct it. Also, parts of the copy machine or printing capabilities are KIND OF BROKEN or miscued which I have to call one of the managers over for because “I” don’t have the “secret code”. This all takes time and numbers away from my productivity time. THEY claim that I don’t know how to clear the jams or errors but the machine is from outer space and seems to make new codes and errors beyond belief which take more time and lots of TSK TSK TSK from SISTER I OUGHTA KNOW BETTER ANGELICA of the MOTHERHOOD. They promoted one of us before I got hired to one of THEM and HE is NOW JESUS CHRIST OF MACHINES. GOD forgive me now as I will either see his ass in hell or I will watch him go there !!!!! At this time I am only being verbally abused in front of other employees and I know I am being talked about when I’m in THE ROOM because of the way THINGS ARE when I get back in there from a bathroom trip. It’s like “WHO’S IT” and there is nowhere to go in that locked room. I am completely at a loss for thoughts or words and desperate for some kind of help legally or psychologically as I am falling into deep depression, alcohol abuse and life appreciation, is that a term yet in the funk and wagnels dictionary ???? :-( Sorry for the Laugh-In promo rememberance from the sixties..... We have all kinds of rules and regulations worldwide but I’ll have to look into the bullying thing. One of the bully/managers keeps on reminding me that there is a clause of no suing the company no matter what that I should have signed upon
accepting the job with a smirk on his face. I’ll eat garbage before I
take this anymore, but they’ll pay on way or another. I am not a
vengeful person but I can only take so much. Can I lose my mind now
or do I have to make an appointment ?????? I love all of you that are
going through this now or in the past. This is not the first job where
I’ve had problems. Everyone is so self-rightious and power-hungy,
afraid for there own jobs that they have to make it hard for anyone
else. Does it really have to be that way or is it just the way we live
these days ???? Live by your own rules and so-called values, I
AM (!!!) GOD HELP ALL OF US JUST FOR A
JOB !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!