



Dealing with a Workplace Bully

Ann Golden Eglé, MCC
September 2012

It's intriguing how the roles we chose, or those that were placed upon us early in life, remain decades later. Perhaps you were the class clown or leader, and that description still fits you today. That may be okay with you.

What if you were the playground bully and have not shaken that revolting behavior? Though harmful to others, you may feel that this tactic still works for you.

Or, what if you were the victim of constant bullying as a child or teen? Too ashamed to admit it, you've not taken steps to change this acceptance within yourself. Bullies can spot a victim within seconds and pounce if it serves them.

When clients tell me that they are in an abusive situation at work (perhaps a boss or associate is constantly bullying them) I ask if this is a familiar role. Though admittedly an uncomfortable question, they more often than not answer "Yes."

According to the Workplace Bullying Institute:

- 35% of workers have experienced bullying firsthand
- 62% of bullies are men; 58% of targets are women
- Women bullies target women in 80% of cases
- Bullying is 4X more prevalent than illegal harassment (2007)
- The majority (68%) of bullying is same-gender harassment

Wikipedia defines workplace bullying as the tendency of individuals or groups to use persistent aggressive or unreasonable behavior against a co-worker and can include such tactics as verbal, nonverbal, psychological, physical abuse and humiliation.

This type of aggression is particularly difficult because workplace bullies often operate within the established rules and policies of their organization and their society.

If you are in an abusive 'bullying' relationship please take steps immediately to correct your situation. Here are my '**Top Seven Tips**' to rid yourself of this burden and get back to the powerful, successful, productive 'you' that you know you are.

- 1) **Stop making excuses.** Admit to yourself that this behavior is unacceptable. Admit how much this has affected your self confidence and other relationships.
- 2) **Find an inside, trusted advisor.** A person with whom you work, whom you can trust may be able to provide valuable feedback on what they observe or past occurrences with the individual who is bullying you. Establish a bond of confidentiality prior to discussing your situation with this advisor.
- 3) **Avoid he-said, she-said finger pointing.** You are after a solution, not gossip. Don't go to everyone who will listen to your woes. That only further establishes you as victim.

- 4) **Find someone outside of work.** A trusted friend, mentor or coach outside of work will be in the position to provide an unbiased take on your situation as well as suggestions to move forward. Be candid, open and honest.
- 5) **Know what you want.** Do you want this person's behavior modified? An apology? To correct the situation and stay in your current position? To have the individual punished or fired? A transfer to another department (perhaps there is a better opportunity?) To leave the company? You'll be in a stronger position for my next tip having fully thought out what you want to accomplish. You are not merely complaining, but requesting action.
- 6) **Talk with the highest level individual inside your organization that can make a difference.** After you've gathered your facts and know what you want, set up an appointment to speak with someone who has the power to change your abusive situation. Be well rehearsed. Fewer words and direct examples work best.
- 7) **Vow to no longer be a victim.** Through this experience and the research listed below you now know: 1) what to look for in a potential abuser, and, 2) what to look for in yourself if again placed in the position of being bullied. If this happens you'll take immediate action to correct the situation.

Bonus tip: Do your research. You need to know what to look for in a bully and what to modify in yourself. The Workplace Bullying Institute lists books to help:

<http://www.workplacebullying.org/recommended-books>. One of my favorites is Snakes in Suits.

It's never too late to change. I believe that we are always teaching people how to treat us. Begin today teaching others that you are in no way a victim of their bullying.

Read all of Ann's Writing and Wisdom at: <http://gvasuccess.com/writing-and-wisdom.htm>

Master Executive & Leadership Coach Ann Golden Eglé, MCC, has steered highly-successful individuals to greater results since 1998. President of Golden Visions & Associates, LLC, Ann can be reached at 541-385-8887 or www.GVAsuccess.com. Subscribe to her internationally recognized e-zine on her website.



Golden Visions & Associates, LLC
Coaching for Success
PO Box 1696, Bend, Oregon 97709
541.385.8887 1.888.831.8883
info@GVAsuccess.com

www.GVAsuccess.com