

WORKPLACE BULLYING: Signs and Solutions

Work Means Misery

If you often feel like throwing up or are particularly anxious the night before the start of your workweek, there's a good chance you're experiencing workplace bullying, experts say. While few people look forward to Mondays, they shouldn't cause you to feel physically ill.

Constant Criticism

If the criticism from your boss or co-worker never seems to stop,, despite your history of objective competence and even excellence, a bully might be to blame. Workplace bullies also tend to have different standard in mind for their targets, experts say.

Lots of Yelling

Overt workplace bullies tend to make their feelings known by yelling. If you are frequently screamed at, insulted or humiliated in front of others, you're probably being bullied.

Remembering Your Mistakes

If your boss or co-worker seems to keep a file of your mistakes and constantly refer to them for no constructive reason, you're likely being bullied. Falsely accusing you of errors is another common tactic.

Gossip and Lies

A covert office bully is more likely to spread destructive gossip and lies about you and your performance, rather than scream at you in front of your co-workers. Failing to stop the spread of a rumor can be an act of bullying, too.

You're Not Invited to Lunch or Meetings

If you feel like you're being singled out and/or isolated by your co-workers or boss, socially or physically, you are probably being bullied, experts say. That can mean having your desk moved or not being invited to meetings or even lunch.

You Always Need Mental Health Days

If it seems like all of your paid time off is being used for mental health breaks to get away from the misery of your office, it could be because you're being bullied. Other signs include spending your days off feeling lifeless or your family members showing frustration over your constant obsessing about work.

Sabotage

A workplace bully may try to find ways to ensure that you fail at your job. Examples include changing rules on the fly that apply to your work or not performing tasks crucial to your success, such as signing off on details or taking calls.

Impossible Schedule

A workplace bully won't hesitate to change your schedule to make your life more difficult. If your boss always schedules last-minute late meetings on the days when he knows you're taking night classes or you have to pick up the kids, he or she may be a bully.

Stolen Work

You've been working day and night for weeks on a project that's now getting good buzz at your office. If your boss or co-worker steals the credit, and has a habit of doing so, you're being bullied.



WHAT YOU CAN DO?

CALL your UPSEU Labor Relations Representative.

STOP LISTENING to the bully's lies and verbal assaults. Instead of internalizing the bully's actions and blaming yourself, realize that bullying is a form of psychological violence. You did nothing wrong and don't need to feel ashamed.

TAKE A TIMEOUT

If the situation is severe, it's crucial to have a period away from the workplace where the victim can talk to a counselor. Procrastination ensures an outcome worse than the most feared. Check to see if you have coverage or if your employer provides an Employee Assistance Program.

ASSERT YOURSELF

Assert your right to be treated with respect regardless of who you are and where you rank. Start by warning the bully that his/her behavior is unacceptable. Document the bully's misconduct. Report him/her to anyone who will listen. Break the silence. Rally witnesses and co-workers to help defend you.

The Importance and Benefits of Having a Will

by Morici & Morici, LLP

WHAT IS A WILL AND WHY DO I NEED ONE?

A will is a device that lets you tell the world who you want to get your assets. A will can accomplish some important goals including:

- 1) Naming your personal representative or someone to guide your estate through the probate process when you die.
- 2) Naming a guardian to watch over your minor children and
- 3) Distributing your personal property according to your wishes.

With a will, YOU make these important decisions. Without a will, the state makes these decisions for you. In general, if you die and leave a spouse and children, your assets will be split between your surviving spouse and children. If you're single, with no children, then the state is likely to decide who among your blood relatives will inherit your estate. All assets that pass pursuant to the terms of a will are subject to the probate process, which has some disadvantages. For instance, in probate, your financial affairs become public record and the probate process can drag on for many months, during which your assets are unavailable to your heirs.

WHEN DOES A WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE?

A will only becomes effective when you die. To provide for yourself should you become temporarily incapacitated and unable to make your own health care or financial decisions, you will also need other, vital estate planning tools such as health directives and powers of attorney.

SHOULD I REVISE THE WILL I ALREADY HAVE?

Generally, you should revise a will if you are involved in:

- 1) divorce or marriage
- 2) a change of name or if anyone named in the will has changed their name
- 3) an executor or beneficiary dies
- 4) property bequeathed is sold or purchased
- 5) you enter into a domestic relationship and/or
- 6) you have children

At the same time, review your beneficiary designations for your 401(k), IRA, pension, and life insurance policy since those accounts will be transferred automatically to your named beneficiaries when you die.

WHAT IS A TRUST AND HOW DOES IT DIFFER FROM A WILL?

A trust is a legal mechanism that lets you put conditions on how your assets are distributed after you die and it often lets you minimize gift and estate taxes. However, you still need a will since most trusts deal only with specific assets such as life insurance or a piece of property, but not the sum total of your holdings.

Even if you have what's known as a revocable living trust in which you can put the bulk of your assets, you still need what's known as a pour-over will. In addition to letting you name a guardian for your children, a pour-over will ensures that all the assets you intended to put into trust are put there even if you fail to re-title some of them before your death. Any assets that are not re-titled in the name of the trust are considered subject to probate. As a result, if you haven't specified in a will who should get those assets, a court may decide to distribute them to heirs whom you may not have chosen.

A will is one of the most important documents you will ever make and without professional advice in drafting your will, you could unintentionally leave very complex, complicated, and unresolved issues behind for your loved ones to resolve.

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Improve your Life through Self Reflection

"Know Thyself" was once inscribed above the entrance to the ancient Temple of Apollo in Greece. Great thinkers throughout the centuries have spoken about the value of learning about your true self. It can be messy, but the benefits greatly outweigh any pain your experience from objectively examining your motives, dreams, habits, and other aspects of your self.

It's not an easy task. Ben Franklin once said, "There are three things extremely hard: steel, a diamond, and to know one's self." That's because it's tough to put aside your biases and lifelong influences when you examine yourself. Still, getting to know who you are is a powerful way to improve your life.

One reason is that you'll feel more empathy. By knowing yourself, you'll know other people, because we all share similar experiences and emotions. If someone says something hurtful to you, you're less likely to lash back at them if you've spent time examining how you feel when someone hurts you. You'll also realize that you've said hurtful things before, too. On the other hand, if you've examined how it felt when someone lifted your spirits, you'll be quicker to encourage someone who's sad or discouraged.

The second reason is that you're more likely to realize what you want. When you examine how different actions make you feel, you'll realize which ones bring you the most pleasure and happiness. The reverse is true as well: you'll discover what doesn't feel good and what makes you feel momentarily miserable.

Be honest with yourself. Just because you're supposed to like something doesn't mean you will. But you still can perform a task you don't like and do your best, if it's for an important reason. For example, you may not enjoy going to a regularly scheduled meeting, but when you're there it's a good practice to stay engaged and participate. Overall, this awareness of what you do and don't like can inspire you to make changes that will give you direction and make you happier.

When you question your life, you force yourself to think about who you are and why you do the things you do. Be honest with yourself. Even if some of the answers are disturbing, you're the only person who will know about it, so let the response freely form in your mind.

And be kind to yourself. Nobody has zero flaws or aspects of their life that they would like to change. The goal of self-reflection isn't to become perfect: it's simply to help you better yourself!

Adapted from article by Richard Hawk



TWO WAYS TO "KNOW THYSELF"

1) PAY ATTENTION

Mindfulness has become a popular movement. Many books, articles and research results are regularly published about its benefits. Mindfulness is simply paying attention to what's going on. If you direct that attention to yourself you'll discover more about how you react and who you really are.

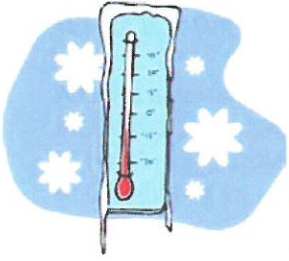
Try it for a few minutes each day, and it won't be long before you realize it's worth the time and effort.

2) ASK PERSONAL QUESTIONS

Ask yourself "why" questions and instead of stopping at the obvious answer, try to dig deeper. Here are a few questions to help you get started:

- > What tasks at work do I enjoy the most and why?
- > Is fear stopping me from pursuing a life-changing goal?
- > Are certain habits holding me back from doing much better at work or at home?
- > Am I too severe when I discipline someone?
- > Do I laugh too much or not enough?
- > How well do I handle stressful situations?

Top 10 Red Cross Cold Weather Safety Tips



As temperatures drop this winter, the American Red Cross offers ten steps people can take to stay safe during the cold weather.

1. LAYER UP!

Wear layers of lightweight clothing to stay warm. Gloves and a hat will help prevent losing your body heat.

2. DON'T FORGET YOUR FURRY FRIENDS

Bring pets indoors. If they can't come inside, make sure they have enough shelter to keep them warm and that they can get to unfrozen water.

3. REMEMBER THE 3 FEET RULE

If you are using a space heater, place it on a level, hard surface and keep anything flammable at least 3 feet away i.e. paper, clothing, bedding, curtains or rugs.

4. REQUIRES SUPERVISION

Turn off space heaters and make sure fireplace embers are out before leaving the room or going to bed.

5. DON'T CATCH FIRE!

If you are using a fireplace, use a glass or metal fire screen large enough to catch sparks and rolling logs.

6. PROTECT YOUR PIPES

Run water, even at a trickle, to help prevent your pipes from freezing. Open the kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing. Be sure to move any harmful cleaners and household chemicals out of the reach of children. Keep the garage doors closed if there are water lines in the garage.

7. BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

Keep the thermostat at the same temperature day and night. Your heating bill may be little higher, but you could avoid a more costly repair job if your pipes freeze and burst.

8. THE KITCHEN IS FOR COOKING

Never use a stove or oven to heat your home.

9. USE GENERATORS OUTSIDE

Never operate a generator inside the home, including in the basement or garage.

10. KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Don't hook a generator up to the home's wiring. The safest thing to do is to connect the equipment you want to power directly to the outlets on the generator.



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