

THE CAUT!OUS WORKER

How to Protect Yourself
from Workplace Bullying



GAIUS JULIUS BETE

About the Author

The author graduated Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Master of Arts in Guidance & Counseling. He is a Registered Guidance Counselor (RGC), Mental Health Professional, Career Specialist and a Licensed Professional Teacher (LPT).

His work experiences started in an industrial setting where he experienced a lot of workplace bullying. His experiences caused him to shift career and move to the education department. He established the guidance and counseling programs of three schools where he was stationed and reaped outstanding employee awards.

As a counselor, he is grounded on the premise that guidance is strength-based. He advocates capitalizing on strengths and improving weaknesses towards self-reliance such as the aim of this book.

His experiences in the workplace, observations and continuing professional education as a worker, educator, mental health professional, career specialist and counselor stimulates his help legacy towards humanity, that is,

Aspire to Inspire before you Expire.

His second book “How to Protect Your Children from Bullying Even if You’re Busy at Work” is on progress.

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How to Protect Yourself from Workplace Bullying

by

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And to almighty God, who never failed to stir up his interest, motivate him, lead him, direct him, and protect him.

I shall pass
through this world
but once.

Any goodness therefore
that I can do
or any kindness
I can show
to any human being
let me do it now.

Let me not defer it
or neglect it
for I shall not pass
this way again.

Anonymous

Introduction

Bullying does not only happen in schools. It continues into adulthood and follows you in the workplace. It has moved on to a higher level. This time, the workplace bully is an adult and/or a professional.

Workplace bullying is very common. Victims and even witnesses experience mental and emotional stress, while the bullies think and believe they have the power over their victims.

If you do not act against abusive behavior, it destroys you. It leaves a long-lasting psychological effect. And, there are no laws to prohibit bullying in the workplace.

It is therefore of paramount importance that you should be well-equipped with wisdom and skills to stay protected when you join any work force.

This book will guide you on how to protect yourself from workplace bullying at the same time develop a life skill that is useful into other horizons beyond your working environment.

Having my first job was the happiest moment of my early adult life. The joy I felt when I received my first paycheck was incomparable. Every employee will experience this euphoria.

This first job is also unforgettable because it was not an easy run. Behind the scene was a struggle that almost made me quit my job. I experienced a lot of workplace bullying and I was unprepared. I tried to reason out that perhaps it was just a matter of “survival of the fittest”. Along the way, my grit carried me and was able to survive those ordeals until I realized that my experiences were driving me closer to my calling – the helping profession.

As a Registered Guidance Counselor in a school setting, my clients include learners involved in bullying, whether a victim, a perpetrator, or a witness. Young as they are, perpetrators have irrational reasons in doing such acts while victims and witnesses suffer long-term damaging effects.

I witness colleagues being bullied in the workplace and feel their agony as they come to find support and let go of their burdens.

So, I decided to put my knowledge into this book to help more people solve their problems on the aspect of workplace bullying and improve their lives.

Career Guidance, one of the Guidance and Counseling services, provides and equips learners with knowledge and skills necessary to identify and follow their occupational interest with the goal of landing on the right job and progress in it with happiness and contentment. However, career guidance trends and strategies focus on the person and the job market and still haven't realized the prime importance to include the workplace environment, where bullies ruin the mental health and self-esteem of their targets.

Having encountered a lot of workplace bullies, my help legacy includes workplace bullying preparedness to my clients.

This book is divided into four parts.

The first part provides you the facts about workplace bullying. It explains **what workplace bullying is**, and **why you must not ignore it**.

The second part explains the dynamics of people, both the bully and the bullied. You'll discover **why people bully** and **why you will be targeted**. Understanding the dynamics of people increases your knowledge on how to go along with different people from diverse culture. You'll find it challenging to evaluate and improve yourself. Knowing and improving yourself will be your key point of reference.

The third part informs you on **what you should know** and **what you should do** when you join the workforce. Everyone must know this, whether you are on the process of job search or application, you are already employed but haven't encountered a bully, or you are already employed, experiencing workplace bullying. It improves self-confidence, positivity and resilience to overcome obstacles and rise to your desired ranks.

The last part equips you on **what to do**, **how to do it** and **where to go** in case the bully attacks. These are non-violent ways to keep you protected while improving yourself. It includes life skills that can be developed to overcome workplace bullies and toxic people.

This book is my decent means to share, present and interpret workplace bullying the way I understand it based on my own experiences, observations, and continuing professional education as a worker, educator, mental health professional, career specialist and counselor.

With the knowledge, wisdom and strategies you will gain from this book, you can safely manage most of the uncomfortable situations you may find yourself in your workplace.

Contents

Introduction.	i
Contents	iii
Chapter 1- Facts of Workplace Bullying	1
1.1 Workplace Bullying is a Worldwide Social Problem	1
1.2 Workplace Bullying Defined	2
1.3 Characteristics of a Workplace Bullying Behavior	3
1.4 Examples of Workplace Bullying Behaviors	7
Chapter 2 – Discover the Dynamics of Workplace Bullies	9
2.1 Who is the Workplace Bully?	9
2.2 Why do people Bully in the Workplace?	10
11 Reasons Why People bully in the Workplace	10
2.3 Are Demanding Superiors Considered Bullies?	21
2.4 What are the Personalities of Workplace Bullies?	21
8 Types of Workplace Bullies	22
2.5 How do Workplace Bullies Work?	26
Chapter 3 – Understand the Attributes of Bullied Workers	28
3.1 Why are workers bullied in the workplace?	28
10 Reasons Why Workers are Bullied in the Workplace	28
3.2 How Does Workplace Bullying Affect a Victim?	33
3.3 Does Workplace Bullying Affect Job Performance?	35
3.4 Does Workplace Bullying Affect Witnesses?	36
3.5 Does Workplace Bullying Affect Employers?	37
Chapter 4 – Legal Grounds in the Workplace.	38
4.1 Labor and Employment Law	38
4.2 Profession Law	39
4.3 Ethical Standards of Practice of your Profession	40
4.4 Employee Handbook	41
4.5 Employee Code of Conduct	42
4.6 Job Description	43
4.7 Duties and Responsibilities	44

Chapter 5 – Boost Your Resilience in the Workplace. 46

9 Ways to Boost Your resilience in the Workplace 46

5.1	Know yourself	46
5.2	Know your legal rights	47
5.3	Learn your workplace dynamics	48
5.4	Exemplify professionalism, integrity and humility	49
5.5	Introduce your name through performance	49
5.6	Befriend your co-workers	50
5.7	Identify support groups	51
5.8	Attend and participate in trainings	52
5.9	Prepare a Plan B	53

**Chapter 6 – What Shall You Do if You Experience Workplace
Bullying? 54**

7 Steps to Do When You Experience Workplace Bullying 54

6.1	Assess the situation	54
6.2	Name your experience	55
6.3	Write the incident on your diary	55
6.4	Report the incident to proper authorities	56
6.5	Stand on your ground	57
6.6	Take care of your health	60
6.7	Move on with Plan B	61

Chapter 7 – Utilize Your Personal Powers 62

7 Power Moves to Overcome Workplace Bullies 62

7.1	Restroom Retreat	62
7.2	Communication Power	63
7.3	Power Words	64
7.4	Power Smile	66
7.5	Humor Power	67
7.6	The Mind Power	69
7.6a	The Mind Trick	69
7.6b	The Mind Block	70
7.7	The Power of Prayer	71
	CONCLUSION	73

Chapter 1

Facts of Workplace Bullying

1.1 *Workplace bullying is a worldwide social problem.*

Bullying has crossed over from the school grounds to the corporate world. Every year, millions of workers/employees are bullied in the workplace. No one wants to think about it, but bullying is occupying a key position in the workplace.

Workplace Bullying is an epidemic that happens to millions of workers around the world. As a worldwide social dilemma, it has been the subject of international researches, yet statistics increase year after year.

This social problem is more than just a small annoyance. It creates a psychological power imbalance between the perpetrator and the victim to a point where the latter develops stress and a feeling of helplessness.

So long as society has its focus on the pursuit of material wealth for attaining more pleasure and satisfaction of the ego to experience power recognition, workplace bullying remains to be a worldwide epidemic threatening every worker.

In a materialistic world, void of any spiritual or cultural values, power and prestige will not only be aspired but competed and even glorified.

So, if you will be found lacking in any power, you will be considered as inferior regardless of the moral of the cause of the one who wants to overpower you.

Every worker is an open target, and no one is exempted from this risk. It is only a matter of time before you will fall victim to this.

You need to be equipped with knowledge, wisdom, strategies, and techniques on how to protect yourself and overcome the workplace bully and the effects of the bullying behavior.

1.2 Workplace Bullying Defined

Workplace Bullying is a mistreatment done by a person or group of persons (perpetrator/s) to another person or group of persons (victim/s) that harms the mental well-being of the latter leaving a stressful effect. It is not a conflict issue but rather an abusive conduct by the perpetrator/s to his/her/their victim/s.

This abusive conduct is offensive, intimidating, threatening, humiliating, embarrassing and generally health-harming. As a health-harming offensive behavior, it leaves a long-lasting negative psychological effect on the victim which interferes with his ability to perform his job well.

While most people consider it as a repeated behavior, a single incident may qualify as a workplace bullying behavior when it creates a risk to health and safety of the victim. Health includes both physical and mental health.

Blocking promotions for example, can be a one-time incident, but causes career growth stagnation and leaves a lifetime effect to the victim.

It causes psychological stress such as but not limited to self-doubt, decrease in motivation, and affects self-esteem. It also affects career decision making which may lead to career shifts and contributes financial problem to the victim.

Another is partiality in giving promotions, designations, credits, recognition and rewards. When this happens, superiors tend to break guidelines and assign their allies to positions/designations even if their qualifications don't match. This is the practice of whom you know and not what you know.

What happens next is the assigned individual (using his position/designation) extracts ideas from qualified people below the line, without proper credits, and use it to his own advantage leaving the victim/s devastated and psychologically stressed.

Don't be the next victim. If this happens to you, act on it. The first move to overcome workplace bullies starts from you.

Read on and you'll discover how.

1.3 Characteristics of a workplace bullying behavior

Workplace bullying behaviors occur in different contexts and forms. Most organizational leaders fail to address workplace bullying incidents because they do not understand its characteristics. Understanding its characteristics forms part of your protection when you come to notice and name an abusive behavior that you may experience.

- **Workplace bullying behavior is not a conflict issue.**

Most people misinterpret workplace bullying as a conflict between the perpetrator and the victim. But it is not.

If a workplace bully intentionally mistreats his victim, even if the latter is doing nothing to him, then it is plain bullying. The victim suffers psychological and emotional stress he never invited or wanted.

Who would like to invite stress? Who would like to get annoyed?

The victim may not even know those unwanted acts directed on him until later time, such as the case of covert behaviors.

However, a conflict may escalate into a bullying act or may become the cause or reason for a workplace bully to do his unwanted behavior such as retaliation. When this happens, a previous conflict will never be right to use as a justification to a bullying behavior.

- **Workplace bullying behavior involves power.**

In most cases, workplace bullies have more power than their victims. It does not mean though that you are weak.

You may have a strong personality but your attacker associates with a superior or a group. The bully may also be a superior or senior colleague who has power over you.

Often, the victim lacks the power to successfully defend himself. In cases of covert behaviors, you will come to know about the abusive act only when the damage was already done, and you feel helpless because you weren't able to protect yourself.

It is the aim of this book to equip you with wisdom to keep you protected from workplace bullies before they come your way, improve your personal power to counteract when something happens, and overcome distress brought by such unwanted behaviors.

- ***Workplace bullying behavior is intentional.***

Whether a bullying act is directed to you with or without your knowledge, it is associated with a purpose. It intends to humiliate, embarrass, intimidate, cause fear, isolate, manipulate, hold and cause harm on you.

The negative and harmful intention comes from the perpetrator and directed to you being the target, whether you like it or not. This makes the bullying incident not a conflict issue between the persons involved because the problem, which is unjust human treatment, lies only on the perpetrator and not on you.

- ***Workplace bullying behavior is either covert or overt.***

Overt bullying behaviors are those obviously done on face to face encounters such as intimidation, threatening, and other aggressive behaviors.

On the other hand, covert bullying behaviors are executed without your knowledge, such as manipulating information, blocking promotions and taking credit of your work.

Depending on situations and specific bullying acts, you may be unaware that you are being bullied. This is so devastating when you come to know about it later and it leaves a long-lasting effect.

On the following chapters, you will come across strategies to stay protected from chances of falling into the trap.

- ***Workplace bullying behavior is offensive.***

Workplace Bullying is offensive, unsolicited, unfriendly, violent and often a threatening behavior meant to cause harm or anxiety through assault or aggression on you. It can be physical, verbal and visual assault.

Most bullying acts, if not acted upon, often escalate and is not limited to a single incident. However, there are circumstances wherein the bullying act may be a single incident but severe enough for you to endure because it leaves physical and mental distress on your part.

In the following chapters, you'll discover how to turn the table in an easy way leaving the sting on your attacker.

- ***Workplace bullying behavior is discriminatory.***

A workplace bully may consider ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation and political affiliation to select his victim. These happens around the globe where people claim superiority over another group.

However, these hostile behaviors are easier to contest because of existing laws regarding these protected characteristics of human race.

Wherever country or state you are in, you may check anti-harassment and anti-discrimination laws applicable in your place.

- ***Workplace bullying behavior is not a joke.***

A bully may start with a joke. If he succeeds on his first attempt because you disregarded it by thinking it's just a joke or prank, he may do it again escalating into a more serious one.

Remember, a bully wants to see you devastated while he tries to gain the impression of being more powerful.

Be wary also because in case of a workplace bullying complaint, your perpetrator may defend himself by claiming it was a joke in attempt to deceive everyone. It will never be a joke to disturb your mental state and leave you emotionally shattered.

My Experience.

When I was in a private company, I had the chance to work in the factory specifically production department. I handle bulk of milk powder at the main funnel before it is syphoned to the packaging machine.

One day, a colleague, who was stationed outside (stripping the covers of the bulk), entered our workroom and threatened me with his knife. One of the witnesses, reported the incident to our supervisor.

But this supervisor told him, “Let them be. Whoever will die, we will bury him. Whoever will be standing, we will file a case against him.”

Sadness filled my heart upon hearing this feedback. So, the following day, I wrote a letter to the Factory Manager stating the facts that transpired and that I was disappointed by how it was acted upon by our supervisor.

It was very clear from the company’s code of conduct that threatening to harm is unacceptable behavior. I also pointed out that the way the supervisor commented was unprofessional and he didn’t even bother to act and provide intervention measures.

The following day, that supervisor’s eyes were swollen as he was reprimanded by the Factory Manager. He had been crying a lot then suffered sleepless nights because his career was stained by bad record of his own doing. He was the one under “hot water” now. He was shocked and unprepared. He never expected that someone would file a complaint on him. He tried to make an excuse by telling it was a joke, and that his joke was misinterpreted.

But that was not a joke. Nobody with a normal state of mind would ever believe him. He tried to retaliate on me but couldn’t find anything to charge on me.

On my part, I was also stressed. My supervisor was monitoring me to find faults. My perpetrator has a relative in the company management. Friends of my perpetrator have their eyes on me because they fear that he (my perpetrator) will be dismissed from the company.

I hear colleagues talking about the incident on hallways and rest areas inside the plant. I also sense people (both from the management and rank and file) who support me but prefer to keep silent because they do not want to be involved.

It was hard but I stood on my ground because I haven’t done anything wrong, yet they psychologically disturbed me. I was able to turn the table around and let them suffer the consequences.

In workplace bullying, you need to be strong inside and out.

Read on to find out how.

1.4 Examples of Workplace Bullying Behaviors

There's a wide variety of abusive behaviors that can be found in the workplace.

Here are some workplace bullying behavior examples from different experts. These are the most common.

If you happen to experience one that is not found in here, take a closer look at the behaviors where it may be closely related to.

- **Intimidating a person**; humiliating a colleague or subordinate; reprimanding a subordinate in public or in front of other colleagues; use of obscene language.
- **Name calling**, either verbal, or written.
- **Undermining** or deliberately impeding a person's work, making threats about job security, purposefully blocking someone's progress at work, removal of responsibilities without good reason.
- **Stealing credit** and taking unfair advantage
- **Any form of aggressive behavior**, such as shouting; yelling or using profanity; physical abuse; threatening; verbally disrespecting a person; impulsive destructive behavior; insulting the target person or his personal life.
- **Manipulation of roles or guidelines**; assigning tasks that can't be completed by the deadline and setting unrealistic or impossible goals; setting you up to fail.
- **Preventing access to opportunities**; blocking applications for training, leave or promotion; denying an employee access to resources, assignments, projects, or opportunities that are available to others; blocking promotion.
- **Making offensive jokes** either verbal, written, text messages or email.
- **Interference or sabotaging your job**; withholding information to set the target to fail; intruding on a person's privacy by pestering, spying or stalking; tampering a person's personal belongings or work equipment.
- **Constant criticism**; invalid or baseless criticism and faultfinding.

- **Belittling**; downgrading an employee's capabilities; ordering the target to do work below competence; giving meaningless tasks.
- **Scapegoating**, blaming others for mistakes; unwarranted punishment.
- **Ignoring opinions and views**; isolating, excluding a person; failing to invite or inform a person about an essential meeting.
- **Spreading rumors**; gossips to degrade the general well-being of the victim.
- **Excessive monitoring** of a target's work (micromanagement); overbearing supervision; excessive, impossible, conflicting work expectations or demands.
- **Being overworked** and expecting unreasonable response times; exposing the target to an unmanageable workload; devaluation of personal life.
- **Little or no feedback** on performance;
- **Favoritism** or treating you differently from other co-workers
- **Inequitable and harsh treatment**; ignoring or presenting hostility when the target approaches; humiliation or ridicule in connection with work.
- **Cyberbullying** – abusive acts through digital means.

Tip.

If you are not sure if an action or statement could be considered bullying, you can use the "reasonable person" test.

Share your concern to other people and ask them if they would consider the actions, that you are experiencing, as acceptable or not.

However, use their opinion and feedback for your reflection and beware of people who are fond of igniting fire for others to come in conflict with other people.

Chapter 2

Discover the Dynamics of Workplace Bullies

2.1 Who is the workplace bully?

Anyone in the workplace can be a bully. He may be a colleague, a partner on the job, a senior, a junior, a supervisor, a manager, or even the top executive.

The dynamics of workplace bullying is similar on how children bully in schools. The only difference is that, the bullies in the workplace are no longer kids or teenagers, but adults and professionals. Kids and teenagers may be understood for their immature behavior. But an adult, whether professional or not, who has a fully developed brain, has no acceptable defense to his unacceptable immature behavior.

My experience.

My very first job was a sales truck driver in a food company. My partner was my truck salesman (my senior). I load the truck with grocery goods, drive to our customers, unload and deliver their orders, and merchandise the area.

Our company deposits our travel expense budget on the account of my salesman (being my senior). He was obliged to give me the amount I was due, but he deprived me on this for four months. Because I was on probation for six months, I just let this pass and used my own salary for my travel expenses.

This was discovered by our supervisor, who happened to ask me if my salesman had given me my per diems. I told him the truth. My salesman was reprimanded and warned. This was followed by other bullying acts associated by other colleagues.

Since I was the newest and lowest in rank among us in the team, I had to endure their behavior and aimed to pass my probationary period towards my permanent employment status.

Tip.

Always remember, the truth will set you free. Telling the truth is much easier than generating false statements every now and then.

2.2 Why do people bully in the workplace?

There's a lot of reasons why people bully in the workplace. The increasing complexities of life, struggle for power, and irrational desire to be in higher grounds instead of equality drive people out of compassion.

No matter how much you love your job, that you wake up in the morning full of enthusiasm, a workplace bully can make going to work a living nightmare.

Bear in mind that workplace bullying is not about you. It is about the bully. He uses ineffective coping techniques to tackle issues he is struggling in his life. He uses insults and tactics to help him get to his way while making you feel terrible. He uses several irrational reasons for his immature behavior.

The good thing is you can do something. Understanding why your bully is attacking you will help you figure out a way to positively respond to the bullying dynamic.

Here are

11 Reasons Why People Bully in the Workplace.

1• People bully to step up the ladder.

A workplace bully, obsessed with climbing up the ladder, is inclined to consciously or unconsciously mistreat people to his advantage. Regardless of the means, so long as it brings him close to his desires, he chooses to step on you even if you are really helping him.

My experience.

When I was a merchandiser in a food company, my colleagues and superiors were impressed with my work. One day, I was informed by my colleagues that our area manager asked our supervisor to endorse me for promotion, but the latter told him that he still needs me and my services.

A year passed and another area manager came in, and he too was impressed with my performance, and he also asked my supervisor if he could endorse me for promotion. Again, my supervisor gave him the same response that he still needs me and my services.

My supervisor talked to me personally and admitted that he needs me to help him and promised to help me in the future. Unfortunately, his promised help didn't come to reality.

This was my experience with my boss who craved to step up the ladder and held my career growth to his selfish advantage. My performance was a necessity to his achievement, so he put my career progression on hold.

If he had released me for that promotion, opportunities could have been different. My career decision-making could have been different, too.

When the company offered us a redundancy package, a cost-cutting measure, this experience affected my decision-making. I rejected the company's offer and joined the WORKER'S UNION to file a case against the company.

This was the reason why I went to the factory where I experienced what I shared on page 5. Then I found out that even the union officers have a vested selfish interest and are not really helping the members. This prompted me to leave the company.

Tip.

In the world of work, it is not bad to work the extra mile and share your talent and skills, especially if you have the passion for it. This will prove your contribution, worth, and loyalty to your organization.

But don't give all what you can. Have time for yourself. Review your goals and see if you're on track.

Remember too, that in every negative situation, there is always an opportunity. Just look for it.

Workplace bullying behaviors may crash your career. Always look on the positive side. It plays a crucial role in your decision-making that's why you must be able to overcome it because any decision you make will have a lifetime effect.

2● People bully to improve their social status.

A workplace bully often prefers to work with people who have values and personalities like him. But this can't be perfectly attained because we are individually unique, including the fact that we come from diverse culture.

You may have come across a colleague who always wants to be the center of attention. If you observe him, once he runs out of stories to tell, he tends to comment on other people around just to stay on the limelight. To be able to sustain this social status, he looks down on you if he thinks that you are not as able, as active and as confident as he is to bolster his own weakened self-esteem through a false sense of power.

This workplace bully strongly believes that this will improve his social status in the workplace.

3● People bully to express negativity towards life.

A workplace bully often has issues on his personal life, in his home, or in the community he lives, which he carries as heavy-laden baggage in the workplace. He has accumulated pent-up anger, disappointments and frustrations and is always on the lookout for scapegoats on whom he can release his fury. His negativity compels him to be hostile and abusive, causing harm.

By bullying others, a workplace bully will find an outlet to express his negativity towards life such as feelings of anger and frustrations.

4● People bully to control other people.

A workplace bully will place you in an embarrassing spot to make someone feel better on him rather than you. He wants to show to the world around him that he is always better than you in every aspect.

This person may have emotional burden. He may do his moves consciously or unconsciously to overcome his feelings and problems. He believes that in doing so, he gains power and authority.

In many cases, a workplace bully is sending a message to the bystanders and eyewitnesses by asserting control and domination and making the victim as an example to make his intention be known to a larger audience.

5• People bully to regain power.

A workplace bully may have experienced bullying in one form or another. He may be emotionally neglected and abused or have experienced violence himself. As a result, he looks for a vulnerable target where he can unleash his pent-up frustrations.

Being a victim, a workplace bully's feeling of humiliation or helplessness is being healed by his perception of being powerful again through bullying others.

With the knowledge you will gain from this book, you will also be able to help a colleague who might be undergoing difficulties in life.

6• People bully to overcome insecurity.

A workplace bully feels threatened by his target's strengths and accomplishments and feels insecure about his own abilities. He fears that his reputation may be surpassed by others who don't even have the intention to compete. More often, he wants you to tag along with him because he wants to have control over you.

Rather than confront his own irrational fears and apply himself more diligently to his work and serve as a model to colleagues, a workplace bully decides to target his colleagues and limit them to shine, thus, keeping himself on the limelight.

My experience.

I had been exercising my writing ability through market intelligence reports. I made reports about competitors' activities such as product launching and promotions in our area.

I followed the protocol by submitting these reports to our most senior colleague sales representative only to find out months later that these were never submitted and were just hidden inside his drawer.

Now, I remember, he once told me, "I will be your obstacle."

But God was good. I was able to write an article published on the company's national newsletter that caught the attention of our senior executives.

Tip.

Don't forget that, "What is good will always prevail over what is evil."

Though you may be compelled to endure bullying of this nature and any other hurtful behavior in your workplace, you can always partner with God to bring His goodness and grace to transform every environment.

If you are secure in the gifts God has given you, you will be able to share these gifts with others without worrying much about anyone who might be making more, or become more superior than you are, or take advantage of your kindness and generosity.

Take the opposite path of the bully and make sure to look for opportunities to utilize your strengths. Maximize every advantage not only by utilizing your strengths but also by overcoming your weaknesses.

Once you have read every chapter of this book, and begin applying the wisdom you gained, you'll be amazed to find yourself in a different perspective of confidence that eliminates your weaknesses.

7● People bully because of envy or jealousy.

A workplace bully is often jealous of your successes. Instead of working hard to learn the skills which would make his own success inevitable, his jealousy results in him targeting you in attempt to undermine your performance.

What I witnessed.

I was on the process of knowing my colleagues in my new school assignment. I observed that Mrs. A was being targeted by a group during our meetings. Aside from this, they always talk negatively about her behind her back. Eventually, one of the reasons that surfaced from one of the bullies was the fact that a lot of students who were in the former advisory class of Mrs. A kept coming back to her during their vacant time even if she was no longer their adviser. The promoter was jealous and tried to distract the fact that Mrs. A had established a good relationship and trust with her students when she was their adviser. The bully promoter, instead of establishing rapport to her students, wastes her time annoying her co-teacher with unnecessary gossips and imagined conspiracy theories.

Tip.

So long as you're doing the right thing, don't get intimidated by workplace bullies. Remember, there's nothing wrong on you. Something is wrong on them.

8• People bully to retaliate.

This type of workplace bully may attack you if you tell the real facts.

If you happen to witness bullying, help the victim. Tell the truth to superiors. It's the right thing to do. Remember the golden rule.

The bully may come after you in retaliation, but if you know what to do, the more the bully chooses to resort to his dirty tactics, the more he will get in trouble because he is already being monitored.

Remember, if you helped someone, the same support shall also come to you. It is the law of the universe.

My experience.

My truck salesman (senior partner on the job) did not give me my per diems for four months. When our supervisor asked me if I received my per diems, I told him the truth that I hadn't received anything. As a result, this salesman was reprimanded and warned.

In order to get even with me, he sought refuge from other senior colleagues and they used to call me all sort of names as they laughed every time we were at the office during the late afternoons or early evenings before we were set to go home.

While they wasted their time looking for chances to bring me down, I tried my best to learn the trade and was able to submit two project proposals to my supervisor. After fifteen long years since I left the company, I met that supervisor, who still remembers the titles of those proposals.

Tip.

Don't get frightened by retaliation. Use it as a challenge to do better and you will reap the rewards soon.

9● People bully as a probationary initiation.

For private companies, new employees normally undergo a probationary period of three to six months work before they are fully integrated as a regular or permanent employee.

The purpose of this probationary period is to provide a trial period for the employee to learn the job and for the supervisor to observe and evaluate the employee's performance if the former will fit the requirements of the job.

An employee may technically be removed from a job position at any point of time for any incompetent reason prior to the completion of the probationary period, so long as it doesn't constitute illegal termination.

A workplace bully often interprets this as an initiation period, and instead of teaching, guiding, and modelling goodwill to the newbie, he takes this opportunity to do his thing, knowing that the target has less power being new and on probation. Senior colleagues who experienced hardships during their probationary period tend to pass it on to the newbies.

My experience.

When I was a truck driver in a food company, I happened to work with four different truck salesmen. One of them was experiencing back pain. According to him, he suffered back injury when he was a truck driver like me. He always tells me to move fast while he sits in front of the truck, whenever he's done with his booking, while I'm having a hard time unloading the goods from the truck to the ground, then to the costumer.

Some costumers have stockrooms on the second floor or on the basement of the building, making delivery even harder. Our customers were very observant, telling their reactions to me so I stop once-in-a while to converse with them while having some rest.

My truck salesman took interest on my "pilot bag" (a travelling leather bag issued by the company for our documents and merchandising materials used on the trade) and exchanged his old torn one.

Imagine that? A company issued working bag catches the attention of a bully. He has his own and I'm sure he can request for a replacement if it's already worn out. I was not able to resist because I was on probation.

When I got promoted, and moved to a new area of assignment, my new supervisor noticed the old bag. Of course, it was very noticeable because there was obvious imbalance. The bag was years older than my one-year service to the company. I told him the truth. It was good, he called this salesman and obliged him to return the one issued to me.

Tip.

Talk to someone if you think you are being bullied. Talking to someone releases emotions instead of being piled up inside you. At the same time, listening to their reactions provides insight and comfort. Others may serve as the link to remind the bully of his actions. Oftentimes, it takes a third party to speak before a wrongdoer comes to his senses.

10• People bully because of association.

Some workplace bullies don't get any real benefit from their hostile behavior. They do it to help or favor someone they are associated with.

The master bully lacks the power to execute his motives, so he employs another person who is more powerful and more willing to do it for him. He may also belong to another department, or another workstation and asks for someone within your workplace to check on you.

When this develops, other employees, who are not inclined to bullying, suddenly find themselves freely participating on a workplace bullying scenario.

Bullying by association is like a chain reaction once the bullying act ensues. If these bullying associates see someone being targeted, they tend to gang up that victim.

In cyberbullying, these secondary bullies easily join in with their comments, because they don't see how it affects the target. They are confined on the joy they share among themselves while attacking their target.

My experience.

I received a letter of advice from our superintendent to transfer to a school nearer my residence. I accepted the call because my travel distance to work becomes shorter.

After two years, a new superintendent came in. She wanted to bring me back to my former school. She called me to her office questioning me why I report to my present station.

I calmly told her that I was advised by the former superintendent.

Then she said that someone told her, the reason why I want to be near my work assignment is because of my private business.

See that?

So unknowingly, there was a third party involved.

I explained to her that I was swapped with a colleague so that both of us will be near our residences. It so happened that this teacher-counselor colleague, whom I was swapped with, was able to get a permanent teaching position, so, her temporary position as counselor was left vacant.

I begged her to maintain the status quo because if this will be altered in the middle of the school year, my children, whom I drop in their schools in the morning and fetch late in the afternoon, will be affected.

This superintendent angrily told me that she is giving me a chance but threatened me to think about it because she can give me an irrevocable advice. I thanked her with a smile while her tiger looks moved from head to toe.

I reviewed the Civil Service Manual for Government Employees particularly on the transfer of station aspect and found out that her threat was contrary to the law. According to the manual, a superior must secure the employee's consent first, prior to transferring him to another station.

I found out later that the new school head of my former school was the one suggesting ideas to our new superintendent in order to bring me back to her school for her own selfish interests.

Tip.

Don't get terrified by "tiger looks" and "lion roars". The calmness of a smile and humility is more steadfast.

Remember that he who can conquer evil is mighty and not the one who subdues others through force. The true mighty ones do not feel the need to use force, except in self-defense.

11• People bully because of recognition and reward.

Recognition and reward programs motivate certain behaviors among workers. It enhances performance toward attainment of organizational goals and customer satisfaction. However, it tempts people to ignore their values, integrity and honesty. They cheat just to receive that recognition and reward.

If a recognition and reward program follow a process of competition through submission of papers, it fosters favoritism and partiality. Organization leaders tend to break and manipulate guidelines just to favor their allies. They also interpret guidelines differently to favor people close to them. Corollary to this, workers try to steal or imitate others' ideas, put them on papers and claim it as their own in order to be recognized and rewarded.

My Experience.

In 2019, I was awarded Most Outstanding Non-Teaching Employee Level 2 in our Division. Despite having no rival for the search, I underwent the whole deliberation process. After my papers were assessed, I underwent essay examination and face-to-face interviews.

For year 2020, I was encouraged by our school principal to participate again on the Search for Most Outstanding Employees. I told him I already got the award for my category in 2019 so I will waive for others to have their chance.

Our school principal insistently convinced me to join because we are a big school and it would be embarrassing if we do not have a representative from our school. He was confident because I was able to complete two research works and these will be additional points.

The search was conducted in the school and district levels and I got it for Non-Teaching Level 2 category. District level results were published on a Friday afternoon. I got it, so I qualified for the Division level.

On the following working day, which was Monday, there was already result on the Division level. Names of winners circulated on social media. I and my principal were surprised because no deliberation took place.

A supervisor told my school principal that it was a “grey matter” for the evaluators as to whether I, as a Guidance Counselor, belong to Non-Teaching Level 2 or Related-Teaching category. This irrational reasoning of the evaluators revealed their incompetence. If they were not sure of something, they should have referred “grey matters” to higher authorities. I got the award in 2019, so if they reviewed the records there’s no doubt that I belong to that category.

The selection process was obviously manipulated. The process was not followed and as an applicant, I was not informed. The criteria for selection was disregarded in favor of whom they (the evaluators) were close to. I just smiled and took the humor in it (these secret powers to overcome workplace bullies and toxic people will be discussed in Chapter 7).

When this situation happens, you need to balance your values and principles against your self-esteem. You have two options – to file a complaint (or send a letter of inquiry) or just let it pass.

If you opt to do the former, chances are, the unjust practice will be exposed, the bullies will receive the reprimand and/or other effects of their wrongdoing, and there will be an opportunity for a change. It is also possible that you will be marked by these people and find time to retaliate.

If you opt to let it pass, then it’s okay. But these toxic moves of some people in the organization will just thrive. Not only that. You might also be fighting its effect on your ego such as why did it happen on you – and this is the hardest part. The way you accept it will determine how you act. And the way you act should be towards your own values.

In this experience, I opted to let it pass because there is no assurance that the results will be changed in case investigation will prove otherwise. The result was already declared. Even if I will prove my claim, humanitarian considerations will be used as a scapegoat. I know my workplace dynamics. This is the problem if bullies occupy higher positions.

Although, there was a little sting on my ego, it was bearable. What made it bearable was that I am familiar of the dynamics in the workplace and those people involved. I know their capabilities and I know myself. My pride is that, I won’t go down their level. These all kept my calmness. And these are just a few of what you’ll learn from this book which you too can use when you face similar situations.

2.3 Are demanding superiors considered bullies?

Superiors in the workplace are generally termed as bosses. Traditionally, if you are a newbie, all senior colleagues who occupy positions higher than you, are considered your bosses.

These superiors tend to ask you favors, including personal matters, which you can hardly resist because you want to please everyone and establish good relations. Be cautious because this may affect your job performance. Refer to your organizational chart to know the flow of your job, to know whom you will be directly reporting, and to whom you will be collaborating or working with.

In Chapter 4, you'll come across job description and duties and responsibilities which will guide you on what you will be doing, to what extent, and to whom you will be reporting.

A demanding superior may not be considered a bully if his desire is to obtain the best performance. To be able to attain this goal, he may set high expectations. So long as your health (physical and mental), safety, and personal life is taken into consideration, higher goals and expectations should be considered as motivational tools for growing within the workplace.

A survey conducted by the Workplace Bullying Institute in 2017 showed that 61% of bullies are bosses.

More often, bullying behaviors of bosses are executed covertly.

If your bully is your superior, it can be a difficult struggle especially when the act is covert because it is hard to detect.

A bully superior can use your accomplishments to his credit, manipulate information and can block your promotion without your knowledge. This will be a tough situation because it affects your career growth. The following chapters will provide you several ways to deal with this.

2.4 What are the personalities of workplace bullies?

Personalities and values of people interact in a logical way and contribute in workplace behavior. Every worker has its own way of behavior and no two people are the same. That is why not all workplace bullies are created

equal. We have individual differences. It is because of these individual differences that people come into misunderstanding. It is also in this same sense that people execute differently their bullying behaviors.

So here, we have

8 Types of Workplace Bullies

1• The Narcissist Bully

This type of workplace bully is extremely self-centered. He usually has formal power or legal authority to control others. If power is used in intimidating others, it is a dangerous thing if you are not prepared.

So, beware! Narcissist bullies are often bosses.

They have the power to isolate you if they want to. They can reject your ideas, block promotions, and even use your accomplishments to their advantage.

The problem if you have a narcissist boss at the same time a bully is that he may use your skills to his credit, exploit you whenever possible, and hold your career growth for his own benefit. He can do it covertly. And you may never know.

Tip.

Going the extra mile is always good especially if this is for the organization. However, do not give all your resources. Leave some time and resources for yourself and your family.

2• The Physically Violent Bully

This type of workplace bully uses violent physical acts. His acts include, but not limited to, raising his fist as if to strike, punching, pinching, throwing objects and setting traps, with the primary intent to hurt or embarrass you.

This type maybe less likely to happen for adult workers in a workplace compared to children in schools. However, in a workplace setting, this may surface as a result of tiredness where uncontrolled emotions sneak into our human senses and cripple our moral judgment.

Tip.

A single act of physical violence can be reported to the management for disciplinary action. Refer to your company's code of conduct policies. This will be discussed further on Chapter 4.

3● The Verbally Offensive Bully

This type of workplace bully has poor impulse control. He is prone to hurling direct insults and negative comments. He also may dominate meetings with critical comments and sarcasm. He tends to make a public scene that shames and insults with words, such as hostile teasing.

This type of bully may hide behind jokes. He may pretend to be a joker to trick people. Then once he got something to humiliate you, he'll just burst it out.

Tip.

Be extra careful when you talk with this type of person because he waits for you to commit a mistake then broadcasts it publicly in the form of a joke leaving you exposed and humiliated.

4● The Constant Critic Bully

This type of workplace bully humiliates you face-to-face or in public by pointing out your mistakes. He might not yell at you but always criticizes your work and doesn't see any good thing in you.

There's nothing wrong with criticism, but it must be constructive. Usually this workplace bully is a boss or a senior colleague whom you should take extra care because he might be taking credit for your work.

A workplace bully may reject your proposal because he doesn't want you to shine or earn credits.

My Observation

One of my colleagues made a proposal for outreach charity program just after a typhoon and flood hit our province. Her senior coordinator criticized it as inappropriate and rejected it. The proponent brought it to a higher authority. It was approved and implemented. Sometimes designates below are more critic bullies than proper higher authorities.

Tip.

Remain calm. When the hammer drops, always react with courtesy and a pause. A series of deep and quite breaths will help you settle down. Have your points be repeated in a respectful way.

Document your proposals and accomplishments. Always prepare a copy for yourself then have it marked “received” by the receiving person or office.

When rejected, ask the rejecting party to mark it as “rejected”, then affix his/her signature. Keep these papers for future references. Rejected proposals don’t mean it has no merit at all. It may not be perfect, but it means you are working. It may not be a priority project for your boss. And, your idea can also come out later, in a revised form, authored by others.

5• The Manipulator Bully

This type of workplace bully manipulates his target by withholding resources such as vital instructions, reports, information, time, schedule of meetings, or even sets you to fail.

Part of the manipulation is pretending to be a supporter then exploits your potentials and use your output to his own advantage.

Superiors may also extract ideas from his subordinates, select the best, or combine these ideas and declares as his own. Ideas should be brought out during formal meetings as a brainstorming process and documented in the minutes.

Sometimes, the only way for you to escape from the grips of the manipulator is to say “no” directly and honestly. It may be a very difficult thing to do, especially if you are a subordinate but organization leaders should also understand your personal reasons so long as you don’t violate anything.

What I witnessed.

I had a neighbor who was manipulated by her colleague who claimed to be her supporter and good friend and promised to assist her in her new job as a substitute teacher for someone who was on maternity leave.

She was very helpful in the beginning, so she was able to exploit the potential of my neighbor and stole many of her ideas as she was very good in composing songs and poems.

My neighbor was kind of addicted to the company of her manipulator that she doubted her own instincts and began acting like a follower of her manipulator rather than championing her own talent.

In due time, she discovered that her poems and songs were submitted to a competition as the composition of the manipulator and one of her compositions won third prize in the national level.

My neighbor had lost a significant amount of self-esteem and confidence with her peers and she was only able to regain her credibility after she got appointed in another school. She learned some lessons from that experience.

Tip.

Be wary of colleagues who go out of their way to become your friends especially if they bring you gifts and goodies that you cannot refuse. When this happens, accept the offer but do not allow them to size you up and know what your soft spots are as they are very good in extracting information.

Always refer to official resources from your organization. As much as possible, look for official memoranda, circulars, executive orders, bulletin boards and the like for information and guidelines. Being aware of official directives can ward off possible bullies too.

Don't rely solely on the words of a possible manipulator. Better yet, always refer to or ask confirmation from your direct superior.

6● The Pretender Bully

This bully may take parts of your conversation, twist them a bit here and there, add some spices, then spread these concocted lies to your manager or bosses, in effort to destroy your credibility. This type of workplace bully pretends to be your friend but undermines you when you're out of sight.

Tip.

Identify who really your friends are. Watch out for those who are depreciative of their position and want to move up the ladder. These are people who will always have questionable motives for wanting to seek out information from you as they are the ones who stand most to gain.

7● The Cyberbully

Due to the nature of the internet, people are capable to express their discrimination and bigotry with more freedom as compared to saying it on other people's faces.

This type of workplace bully attacks you through emails, social media posts, and website comments. Since a cyberbully doesn't see your reactions, he will often go much further in his harassment or ridicule than he would normally do if he was face-to-face with you.

Tip.

Stay away from this type of bully by keeping your social media private and limited to known associates and friends.

If you are cyberbullied, take screen shots right away as evidence for future use and references as the cyber police can trace the IP address of the bully even if they are using fake accounts. You may refer to cybercrime laws applicable in your country.

8● The Passive–Aggressive Bully

This type of workplace bully is very tricky. He may behave nicely but skillful when he attacks. He uses body language such as rude facial expressions, rolling eyes, extended tongue, and other actions to ridicule his target. He also includes toxic gossip, jokes and sarcasm. Part of his techniques is to isolate you so he can execute his planned moves.

Tip.

Always look for a companion so there will be a credible witness when the bully attacks because his techniques will be hard to prove without one.

2.5 How do Workplace Bullies Work?

Workplace bullies carry out their plans in different ways. This depends on the intent, personality and type of the bully. Workplace bullying behaviors can also be done overtly or covertly. You need to be observant if these strategies are being used on you.

The Cautious Worker

A workplace bully will make false accusations, spread gossips, yell or display anger in front of people to embarrass, control, or intimidate you. He will break confidentiality to humiliate you and encourage people to turn against you.

A workplace bully will not entertain your ideas, suggestions, and opinions during meetings, use silent treatment to separate you from the group, or exclude you from meetings which you are a part.

Bullying bosses disregard or discredit completed work, despite meeting standards. They also make random rules that they do not even follow or set arbitrary rules and accuse you of being insubordinate if you won't follow. They steal credit for work or ideas and claim it as their own. They may block your promotion and use your accomplishments to their selfish advantage.

Bullying superiors criticize your work even if you perform the same as other employees. They abuse evaluation procedures and sabotage your career, promotion, or recognition that you aspire. They make impossible demands, workloads, deadlines or duties to single you out and ensure you fail.

A workplace bully insults you because of your gender, race, accent, language or disability.

And the worst thing is, he encourages you to quit or transfer rather than face more mistreatment or torment.

Once you experience these unwanted behaviors, it disturbs your mental stability causing you to experience stress, anxiety, self-doubt and feelings of helplessness which will eventually affect your performance.

Don't worry because there is nothing wrong on you, and I keep on repeating this. This book is designed to ease your worries and give you strength to become resilient by unlocking the secrets on how to stay protected.

You may encounter some bullying behaviors not mentioned above. This does not mean that such act does not qualify as a workplace bullying behavior and doesn't need to be acted upon.

These are the most common. You may refer to the examples discussed in Chapter 1. You may also refer to your company's Code of Conduct. This will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3

Understand the Attributes of Bullied Workers

3.1 Why are Workers Bullied in the Workplace?

Every day, workers across the world experience abusive behavior in the workplace.

According to a 2017 survey by the Workplace Bullying Institute, 60.3 million American workers are affected by workplace bullying.

But being bullied does not mean there is something wrong on you.

And you may wonder, “If there is nothing wrong on me, then why do I get bullied?”

Here are

10 Reasons Why Workers are Bullied in the Workplace.

1● You have the skills.

If you are a skilled worker who receives recognition because of a good job or positive contributions to your organization, chances are, you will be targeted by a workplace bully.

There are people who feel intimidated by success of others. Instead of taking it as a challenge to strive more and do the same, they try their best to pull you down. They possess the “crab mentality.” A workplace bully targets someone who has a talent because he feels inferior.

A bullying boss will not allow that his subordinate is more skillful than he is. This may lead him to take advantage of your ideas and declare it as his own.

According to the Workplace Bullying Institute, termination of the skilled but threatening (to bullies) targets are typically based on fabricated lies. Several WBI surveys of bullied targets substantiate this claim.

2● *You gain attention.*

While you gain attention, there will always be people around, who may not be praised by superiors, or who may not have gained positive remarks from colleagues and may put the blame on you for such cause.

There will always be haters and jealous people. Some just get annoyed when their colleagues get praised. Some raise their eyebrows, shrug their shoulders, or just keep quiet but are already thinking on how to pull you down.

There will always be someone who contradicts you and doesn't feel happy on you. It doesn't matter who you are or what positive influence you are trying to make to the world.

Haters and bashers will always exist.

But remember, the smallest mind comes with the biggest mouth. Nobody is exempted from jealousy and hatred from others, we are all subject to its cruelty in life.

3● *You are a good person*

You may be targeted by workplace bullies because of being a good person. This should however not give you any reason to change the goodness of your behavior. This ordeal should give you some insight into why you are being targeted and what steps you ought to take to counter the negativity.

Workplace bullies target those who follow the rules straight forward. A workplace bully, who does some fishy moves within the organization will hate you if he sees your honesty. He even uses your goodness to humiliate you.

He finds your goodwill as an obstacle to his plans.

Find comfort in knowing that it is your goodness that made you a target for being bullied. Take pride that you didn't do anything wrong and you keep on doing the right thing and that is why the bullies get envious of you.

4● You are non-assertive.

If you don't speak up and just let things pass, you have more chances of being bullied at work than those who are assertive employees. Due to your thoughtfulness, you may not react to bullying in a swift manner and this often encourages the bully even more.

Introverts are not only more likely to get bullied than extroverts, they are less likely to report it or ask for help.

According to the Workplace Bullying Institute 2017 survey, 29% of victims remained silent about their experiences.

Reading articles and books such as the **"The Cautious Worker"** will improve your self-esteem and assertiveness skills.

Hearing other people's stories gives insights to benchmark and lessen your chances of being bullied. Those who experienced it are the experts. Learn lessons from their successes and failures.

5● You are different.

Workplace bullies use prejudice and discrimination to single out and target people who are different from them in some way. A lot of people around the world are discriminated because of their nature and origin.

Workplace bullies target their victims because of their race, nationality, tribe, gender, sexual preference, age and even religion. However, this will be easier to contest in the workplace because there are existing laws that prohibit such mistreatments. You may refer to anti-harassment and anti-discrimination laws.

Be proud of your rich and unique cultural origin.

Our different ways of thoughts, beliefs and actions go beyond the established norms of the bullies, who are ignorant of the importance of interdependence as a form of social dependence and the most important human adaptation.

6● *You have unique physical appearance.*

Those who look different in some way often become targets. Because workplace bullies want to feel superior and be in control, they pick on those they perceive as "less than" the standard of ideal beauty.

People tend to mock on others with unique physical appearance. If you are one among those physically impaired, you need to be strong. Having support groups will help a lot. This will be further elaborated on Chapters five and six.

What I witnessed.

In one of the public schools where I was stationed, I observed that some of our female colleagues used to gossip about a certain teacher because of her looks. She was occasionally the subject of the conversation of teacher colleagues whenever she was not in the faculty room. Of all the other things to discuss, all they talked about was how funny one of their colleagues looked like. They used to talk about what she wore, the way she moved, and all that their unproductive minds could think.

Caution.

If you witness this kind of behavior, consider these as preliminary signs that the one who started this kind of conversation is a bully, who may also be targeting you when you are out of sight.

7● *You think independently.*

A workplace bully often hates people who don't go with the established flow or conform to his level of expectations. Sometimes, refusal to join and participate in juicy gossips is a reason enough to irk bullies who will do their best in making you become like them.

The more you stand on your ground, the more the bully is consciously or unconsciously going to see you as a threat. This may be a difficult situation because some people tend to defer to common grounds and often yield to the bully to avoid his wrath.

While standing on your ground, show respect to others. However, showing your respect does not mean you have to follow them. If you respect other people's views, they shall respect yours, too.

8● *You value integrity.*

A workplace bully often targets someone who is compassionate, peaceful, dignified and have a high sense of integrity, honesty and industriousness. But a person with integrity and strong values don't just give in to a person who is fond of deception.

Being punctual for work may not seem an important thing for a workplace bully and may ask you to cover him up. If you refuse to cooperate, you will be considered as a traitor. He may resort by taunting you and calling you names to hurt your ego.

Don't allow this to happen. Turn the table instead. This dishonest person has no right to threaten you. Instead, he should behave right in front of you because you have knowledge about his questionable behavior.

While a person with integrity and strong values is proud of his ethics and moral beliefs, a workplace bully uses these values to mock and harass his target.

If you can't really hide your values, explain to the bully that you respect his beliefs and you would appreciate it if he respects your own too.

If you need to report a co-worker for something he has done, do it. However, remind your boss to keep your identity confidential.

9● *You are younger or older.*

If you are young and new employee, you are vulnerable to workplace bullying due to your lack of experience. Senior colleagues tend to give you additional work and you will find yourself shy to resist. You will also have the feeling that every senior colleague is your superior or your boss.

It is a reality that whenever younger and older employees are bullied in the workplace, they tend to remain silent because they don't want to risk getting into trouble. They fear of not getting a promotion, losing their employment and getting a less satisfactory performance rating.

If you are a newbie, know your duties and responsibilities so you will be guided accordingly on what you will be doing. Identify your professional and personal boundaries.

If you are older nearing your retirement, use your seniority to model outstanding behavior and performance and gain respect from the younger ones who might try to bully you.

10• You are quiet and humble.

If you are quiet, humble and do not socialize much, a workplace bully may think you are weak and use this as an avenue to attack you. A bully will do this to present himself as strong and competent despite his own inadequacies.

If you feel like an introvert, have some friends at work and join casual conversations with your colleagues even if you're just a listener. The bully will be hesitant to pick on you if you are surrounded by people.

Never entertain the feeling of inferiority and thoughts that you will always be rejected for who you are, because such actions will only be self-defeating.

Boost your self-esteem by thinking of your positive traits God has given you and your best accomplishments. Write down what these assets are and read them back whenever you are feeling down.

Read some articles that are related to your job. Any knowledge gained will lift your spirits up.

Read the Scriptures and find out how the patriarchs and the prophets responded to their calling.

Moses for instance, was considered as the most-humble person who ever walked this planet and the Bible affirms that humility was indeed one of his outstanding assets.

3.2 How Does Workplace Bullying Affect a Victim?

Effects of workplace bullying don't end when you leave your workstation. It is more than just a minor disruption of your focus on the job or minor acts of annoyance. Workplace bullying could leave on you a long-lasting psychological distress.

In workplace bullying, there is a psychological power imbalance between you and your perpetrator. While your attacker seems to be more powerful, you, at the receiving end, experience a feeling of helplessness.

The Cautious Worker

This feeling penetrates and rocks your self-esteem. Even if you are well-balanced confident person, the effect of abusive workplace behavior knocks your mental state and wears you down.

When you are hurt by abusive workplace behaviors, you ruminate and start questioning yourself. This makes you doubt in your abilities which consequently affects your performance.

It is important to be grounded on yourself and be mindful if you are experiencing workplace bullying. Once you experience unwanted hurtful behavior repeatedly, have a self-check if you have the following symptoms.

You may experience anxiety, stress, loss of concentration, disrupted sleep, headaches, increased heart rate, and body aches.

If you are shamed or embarrassed, you may abruptly change your lifestyle, and use substances to cope such as tobacco, alcohol, and drugs, or you may even find yourself on food trip.

You may also experience chest pains, high blood pressure or hypertension, migraines, teeth grinding, and obsession over details at work.

For severe effects, you may be experiencing paranoia (easily startled and constantly on guard), nightmares and flashbacks, feeling exhausted, compulsive behaviors, significant weight change (loss or gain), chronic fatigue syndrome, panic attacks, suicidal thoughts, and depression.

Workplace bullying incidents cause you emotional stress, damage your self-esteem, impair your cognitive functioning, and threaten your mental and physical health.

If you are repeatedly abused in the workplace, you have greater chances of acquiring depression. So, you must expand your knowledge and build your resilience.

There are several cases of workplace bullying which led to post-traumatic stress disorders and even suicide.

Bear in mind that suicide is never the answer.

Sharing your thoughts and clarifying uncertainties with someone you are close to, helps in unloading the burden and allowing your consciousness to keep you on track.

On the other hand, if you observe these symptoms on your colleagues, or someone close to you, start talking to them and give them moral support even by just being there for them.

My Experience

Workplace bullying experiences affect a person's decision making. This decision making is crucial because it eventually leaves a lifetime impact.

In my own experiences and decision making which I shared on page 10, I also had been ruminating about those decisions for years. It also came to a point where I was questioning myself whether that decision was right, or it was a wrong move.

I had been speculating what would have happened if I did otherwise. Of course, things would have been different. I used to think that my life could have been better.

When this happens, I ground myself and focus on my accomplishments. Focusing on what I was able to accomplish in my life gives me the sense of worth and justification that my decisions were right.

3.3 Does Workplace Bullying Affect Job Performance?

When you are subjected to workplace bullying, you will have a difficult time performing your job effectively.

Your effectiveness will be challenged when you start to experience feelings of depression, guilt, shame, fatigue, and insomnia.

Your focus on the job will be greatly affected because of these physiological responses to emotional stress. You will have tendencies to develop feelings of worthlessness and cannot perform to your best.

You will also have trouble making decisions when you start to doubt yourself. When this situation happens, there will be a decrease on your self-esteem, concentration, and productivity.

You will not only lose motivation, you will also lose time thinking about the incident and of ways to defend yourself, avoid the bully and network for support.

Decrease in motivation greatly affects performance. It encourages affected individuals to leave their jobs. Poor performance caused by decrease in motivation will eventually be a ground for employers to fire their workers.

On the succeeding chapters, you will learn a lot on what to do and how to deal with these situations.

You will discover that you have your personal power to overcome these workplace bullies. You can also develop these personal powers into life skills and use them on other horizons of your life.

3.4 Does Workplace Bullying Affect Witnesses?

Workplace bullying does not only affect the person being bullied. It also affects those who witness the incident. It creates a negative work environment.

Witnesses may fear that they will experience the same. As a result, they also feel emotional stress and helplessness which is disempowering. They also experience feelings of guilt if they were not able to help the victim. These lead to low morale in the organization. Low morale in a workplace contributes to a decline on productivity.

Research has revealed that witnesses are reluctant to speak out. They do not want to intervene because of fear that the bully will retaliate on them. That is why they are hesitant to be called upon to speak up during grievance mechanism procedures.

Some witnesses fear of not being right, fear of being embarrassed, fear of being emotionally hurt, and fear of being reversed when they speak up. Some believe that even if they speak up, nothing good will really happen so they just shut up.

Being a witness of an abusive behavior is emotionally stressful. However, if you happen to witness a workplace bullying behavior, do something to help the victim. Offer yourself to tell the truth.

It will be rewarding.

You may be hesitant right now. But once you finished reading this book, you'll be delighted that your fear in dealing with a workplace bully is gone.

3.5 Does Workplace Bullying Affect Employers?

Workplace bullying has detrimental effects, not just on the victim and their co-workers who witness it but also on employers. It may cause disruption of the work during the actual incident, after the incident, and on grievance mechanism procedures.

Workplace bullying creates a hostile environment which affects the morale of workers. When morale of workers goes down, level of productivity follows.

Workplace bullying incidents promote absenteeism when victims prefer being absent than to endure the effects of abusive behaviors.

When victims file charges and win, this will result to claims on damages, compensation claims, and embarrassing image against the organization.

Other costly effects on the employers include; increased use of sick leave, health care claims and staff turnover; decrease of employee loyalty and commitment on their job; additional costs of recruitment and training new employees; poor and negative publicity; and increased risk of legal action.

Caution.

Because of these impacts on the employer, organization leaders tend to interpret workplace bullying incidents as a conflict between you and your perpetrator and suggest that you settle it within yourselves. Some do it because their kind of leadership will be affected.

Let me ask you this. If you are not bothering your colleague, yet he comes in and annoy you, would you accept this as a conflict?

Of course not.

So, never accept the idea that workplace bullying is a conflict. You are a victim and the perpetrator must face the consequence.

According to the 2017 survey report of the Workplace Bullying Institute, 71% of employers react to reports of abusive conduct **in ways that harm the target.**

Employers have the power to either sustain or eliminate abusive conduct. The sad reality is that even the general public seems to know that it is the target, the victim of the abuse, who is asked to make additional sacrifices to stop the bullying. That is why, “77% of Americans support a new law to address abusive conduct at work” (WBI, 2017).

Chapter 4

Legal Grounds in the Workplace

In addition to your degree/s, skills, competencies, and other qualifications, acquaint yourself with laws, standards, manuals, codes, and guidelines applicable to your profession, job and the workplace. Knowing these legal grounds initially establishes your protection from workplace bullies.

4.1 Labor and Employment Law

Labor and Employment laws protect you, as a worker, from abuse by your employer. In these laws, your rights in the workplace are incorporated. Without this, you would be vulnerable to threats.

The primary functions of labor and employment laws are to provide equal opportunity and pay to workers while ensuring their physical and mental well-being and safety. It exists to protect groups of employees and labor unions, as well as employers. It regulates the relationship between employers and their employees. This applies to companies that employ fifteen or more people.

By complying with relevant legislation of labor and employment laws, both employers and their administrative staff members can ensure that their hiring and dismissal processes are fair for every individual. Employees are protected by labor and employment laws against discrimination such as those based on age, race, nationality, religion, gender, sex orientation, and disability.

Having knowledge on labor and employment laws gives you a shield against unjust treatment from your employers or their management staffs. Oftentimes, the management staffs are the perpetrators in the workplace.

They tend to manipulate employer's obligations and responsibilities to its employees such as premiums on insurance benefits. Some disregard the rights and benefits of employees and or favor relatives, friends or close allies on granting these rights and benefits.

Tip

Check your premium contributions on insurance companies from time to time. Sad to say, a lot of people from private industrial sector worked for years in their company only to find out during retirement that their insurance premiums paid by their employer is not equal to their years of service. Often, the problem lies not on the employer but on their employees, who are tasked to do the job.

4.2 Profession Law

Every profession has a law implemented by the government and/or professional organizations to ensure quality standards of practice of professionals so that quality services are received by consumers.

Organization leaders can manipulate your position, block promotions or career progression which will eventually lead to salary stagnation. This is degrading which decreases the morale of the professional and may force them to make career shifts.

Career shifts are also stressful due to loss of time and resources and a need for a bunch of adjustment and coping mechanisms.

Understanding how your organization value your profession helps a lot in your decision-making.

In the Philippines, for example, Republic Act 9258 is the law that governs and regulates the Guidance and Counseling Profession. Guidance Counselors have high qualification standards wherein one must finish a Masters' Degree in Guidance and Counseling before being allowed to take the Licensure Examination.

According to this law, one must pass the Licensure Examination and be registered under the Professional Regulation Commission, before he will be allowed to practice Counseling.

Guidance Counselors are also mental health professionals as recognized by Republic Act 11036 or the Mental Health Act.

They are also career specialists as per Republic Act 11206 or the Secondary School Career Guidance and Counseling Act.

In some educational settings, guidance counselors are being bullied unconsciously by organization leaders by assigning tasks outside their roles and neglecting their career progression.

Most of these leaders do not understand the importance of counselor roles and do not support their career progression.

Some policy makers create policies and assign roles to Guidance Counselors which are derogatory and contrary to their professional ethical standards of practice. They do this without consulting the Profession Law and the Accredited Professional Organization of Guidance Counselors.

As a result, a lot of Registered Guidance Counselors were demoralized. Many of these counselors shifted to teaching positions because of wider career progression leading to higher salary grade.

This caused the scarcity of Guidance Counselors and nearly into extinction in the guidance and counseling field.

Being aware of their professional law, Guidance Counselors reached out to government officials for enactment of a law that would ensure salary commensuration and standardization.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, Lawmakers realized the importance of Guidance Counselors in providing psychosocial support to the learners and are now working to address the shortage of these professionals, their limited career progression, and very low salary grade against their high qualification standard.

4.3 Ethical Standards of Practice of your Profession.

Each profession has a set of ethical principles and standards governing behaviors of professionals in their practice. This serves as guidance for professionals towards the meaning and purpose of serving in their chosen profession. Professionals must exercise standard behaviors towards the state, their profession, their colleagues, their clients, the community and themselves.

Sometimes your workplace bully will tell you to do things contrary to your professional and ethical standards of practice. You might be forced in following their bidding in order to be at peace and not disturb the status quo. It requires tact and skill in not following suit.

Never break ethical standards of practice. Your knowledge and adherence to these ethical standards will surely give you a strong foundation that can't be easily manipulated by workplace bullies, even your boss.

A lot of people, including organization leaders, don't understand the real purpose of guidance and counseling in the academic institutions. They see guidance and counseling as reprimanding or giving punishments which is wrong because guidance and counseling is a helping profession. Consequently, they ignore the importance of counselor's roles and limit their support in the provision of enough space for a guidance and counseling office and a counseling room.

Any registered guidance counselor recognizes his primary role to make clients feel comfortable. In order to achieve this, there is a need for privacy in a counseling room to protect confidentiality of issues.

Knowing the standards, counselors in schools have the right to request (from administration) this standard requirement in order to be effective. A guidance and counseling office must be exclusive to protect their clients. Having it mixed with other faculty members is unethical.

Tip

Maintain your professional ethical standards of practice. A lot of factors may arise and challenge your decision-making. These maybe considered so long as the minimum ethical standard is maintained.

4.4 Employee Handbook

An employee handbook is a document of collective information about the company. It contains their profile such as history, corporate objectives, philosophy, mission and vision, products and services.

It includes policies and procedures regarding employment, salaries and wages, working hours, inter-office relationships, employees' responsibilities, grievances, and disciplinary action process flows.

An employee handbook also includes the company benefits program. Aside from government benefits prescribed by law, a company has its own benefits program such as medical/hospitalization, Christmas gifts, service awards, leave benefits, loan benefits, product-related and work-related benefits, retirement and assurance program and many more depending on every company.

For the government sector, employees are governed by a unified civil service manual. This manual defines the standard acceptable behavior of a government employee.

Employee handbooks are given to employees as a handy guide and reference for them to meet the terms and conditions of their employment.

4.5 Employee Code of Conduct

Employees need to be aware about what is expected of them in the workplace. A code of conduct is essential for maintaining discipline at the workplace. It clarifies an organization's vision, mission, core values and principles, linking them with standards of professional conduct.

It is a set of guidelines for employees on what they can do and what they are prohibited from doing in the workplace. It consists of a set of rules and regulations which employees are obliged to adhere to maintain harmony and order.

Employees who breach the code of conduct incur disciplinary measures that can range from a verbal warning, a reprimand, a written warning, suspension, or dismissal depending on the gravity and frequency of the offense committed.

This will be your legal basis to notice and name abusive behaviors and report it to Disciplining Authorities.

Bullying, as a general term, may not be specified in the code of conduct. Name unwanted behaviors and match it with the code. Identifying single acts contrary to the code should be reported immediately to authorities.

No matter how small the offense may be, so long as it is found in the code, report it.

You should not mind if the sanction is just a verbal warning. The point in here is, you reported the matter and it was made known to authorities. This report will be used in the future if the offender commits the act again. While prohibited acts are being repeated, sanctions become heavier.

Caution.

The most common mistake in here is that, victims often accept to forgive and forget. If you are the victim, don't accept this agreement. This will only allow the perpetrator to do it again on another target since he doesn't feel the consequence. Others will also do their harmful behaviors because they do not see perpetrators being sanctioned.

Workplace leaders also tend to let the bully apologize to the victim and have it amicably resolved. Leaders filter issues like this because they don't want it to reach higher authorities. Its effect on the organization bounces back on them. They believe that in doing so, their leadership reputation is maintained, not realizing that they are also violating policies.

Bear in mind that workplace bullying is not a conflict issue.

If you are the victim, there is nothing wrong with you. It is the perpetrator who has a problem and is annoying you.

Tip.

No matter how small a bullying behavior is, it must be documented. This serves as reference for future similar behaviors to be fairly treated under the Code of Conduct and other applicable laws and policies.

4.6 Job Description

When you start your job, you will receive a copy of the Job Description of your position. A job description clearly states the essential job requirements, duties, responsibilities, skills and competencies required in order to perform a specific position. It also specifies whom you will be reporting to, whom you will be supervising (if there is), and whom you will be collaborating.

The purpose of a job description is to provide a written definition of the employer's expectations regarding job standards, to clarify the scope of responsibilities, and to identify the essential functions for each position within the organization.

It also specifies other personal attributes required of the person occupying the position as well as the desired outcomes of performance. Knowing your job description sets the perimeter to the scope where you will focus your attention.

4.7 Duties and Responsibilities

An employee's duties and responsibilities are more detailed aspect of the Job Description. It specifies the activities and how much of your time is allocated on each aspect of duty and responsibility. Duties and responsibilities are important to ensure that you are aware of what is required of you to perform in your respective position. This document is always attached to your appointment letter.

Some employers include "Does related work". This may be very broad and vague allowing superiors to abuse their subordinates by manipulating roles such as giving undermining tasks and insist that it is under "related work". As an employee, you must be vigilant on this. "Related work", as the term implies, should be within the scope of your profession law, ethical standards of practice, job description, and line of specialization.

Going the extra mile such as extending extra hours, skills and talents is a nice way to show support to your organization so long as you will not be compromised and undermined.

My experience.

I was instructed to catch learners who cut classes by hanging around computer shops, stores, or under the trees playing digital games with their smartphones. While this may be contributory to the school in general, it is detrimental to my role as a counselor because it affects building trust among learners.

In the counseling session, you need to establish rapport with your client. It will be difficult to establish rapport with the learners if you behave like a policeman running after them. Their willingness to confide personal problems will also be affected. Professional boundaries can also be undermined.

I explained to the school principal the reason for not complying with his request in the interest of the greater good. I suggested that there are discipline officers, school guards and watchmen who are more appropriate to do it.

Some teachers send learners to the guidance office for punishment and I humbly refer those learners to the discipline officers. Giving punishment to erring learners is not the job of a counselor. It is for the discipline officer.

Guidance and Counseling is a helping profession. My role is to provide guidance and counseling to help learners understand themselves (self-realization), set a goal in life and develop a plan to reach that goal (self-actualization). Erring learners, who violate school rules and regulations, as well as perpetrators of bullying, receive counseling after they serve their sanctions given by discipline officers.

There are proper procedures and process flows as well as approaches considered under ethical standards in order to have quality effective results.

You must bear in mind that it is not about complying that matters. It is always helpful to give that extra effort to your organization so long as your professional ethical standards will not be undermined. At the end, you will be at fault and blamed if you allow the breach. Worst, your license will be at risk.

Caution.

Don't allow your colleagues and superiors to push you on crossing your boundaries. There will always be people who are looking for scapegoats and you should make sure that you will not be the one.

Tip.

Explain your professional limitations to your superior and other colleagues. If you have different professions, don't expect them to know yours. They will be glad to learn from you. In the same way, you too learn from them.

Chapter 5

Boost Your Resilience in the Workplace

When COVID-19 pandemic struck the world, people realized the necessity to boost their immune system. Once you enter the workforce, you also need to boost your immune system and resilience from workplace bullying. I prefer the word bullying, instead of bullies, to include effects of the behavior which is a deadly malady to humans.

So, here are

9 Ways to Boost your Resilience in the Workplace.

5.1 Know yourself

Everything that involves you starts on you.

Knowing yourself can make you better understand how you will react, why will you react, and what will be your reaction to certain behaviors of people around you. You are unique and it is only you who knows your threshold of being affected by aggressive behaviors.

Just like wearing a bullet proof vest in your body, you don't need to bullet-proof all your body parts. You wear it on the most vulnerable part where the bullet would most probably penetrate your vital organs.

In addition, your knowledge about where the bullet proof vest is worn gives you a pre acquired insight on what to expect, what to feel, and what would happen if ever a bullet comes in.

If you know that you have hypertension, you will probably evade a bully and report the behavior to proper authorities, instead of confronting him face to face. You don't need the face-off which may escalate into further harm. Secure your safety first.

If your ego won't be hurt if someone calls you a name, or an adjective, instead of your name, then you will probably let it pass. At least you know, it doesn't matter on you and it won't cause you any harm. So, there's no problem.

On the other hand, if you don't want this happening to you, especially on a regular basis, you should immediately react to inform the bully how you feel. If he continues, report it. This will be explained further on the following chapter.

The degree of your sensitivity or empathy will dictate how you perceive a bullying behavior. You may allow a bullying act to happen once. If it stops there, then it might be okay, but if it continues and reaches your threshold of acceptance, then you need to react and deal with it.

Your self-reflection will determine your susceptibility to workplace bullying. You need to identify these areas and accept what is true and what is not about yourself.

5.2 Know your legal rights

Bear in mind that employers, superiors, and colleagues in the workplace don't have the right to mistreat you.

Laws, code of conducts, ethical standards and policies are put in place to regulate incidents of inhumane behavior.

You just need to identify the specific bullying act and locate any violation from those legal references discussed in Chapter 4, or any other related documents such as memoranda, circulars, and other applicable issuances.

Familiarize yourself with your rights as well as the different policies, rules, and regulations. It boosts your confidence, positivity and decision-making in dealing with negative behaviors that you encounter in the workplace and in performing your job as well.

In some countries, there are manual of standards in the government service with corresponding sanctions, either criminally or administratively, when violated by employees.

If you are a person with disability, you are protected under The Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities of the United Nations General Assembly.

5.3 Learn your workplace dynamics.

All employees, regardless of hierarchy or rank, feel the need to be valued and respected. More than ever, you would want to be a part of a workplace culture that allows you to discover your own identity and inner confidence and unleash your full potential.

You must understand the workplace dynamics by harmonizing your skills and personality with the goals of the organization, company or establishment you are employed in.

Be observant. Pay attention to how things function in your workplace. Recognize the flow of the stream.

Socialize and familiarize yourself with the relationships between colleagues in the workplace. You don't need to be an extrovert if you are not. Just observe the ambience around you and find out who is related to whom, and who is close to whom.

Take note if there are workplace bullying behaviors happening and how frequent. Observe if these incidents are taken seriously by organization leaders.

If you observe a bully, determine his relationship with management staffs or bosses. If you are not familiar with this person, ask from other colleagues who know him well.

A colleague may have undesirable personality because he has connections to the management, administration, or organization leaders.

According to experts, bosses are known to be shields of bullies. A workplace bully maybe your immediate superior who has total control over you. This may be a difficult situation especially if he is considered an asset to the organization.

These observations, will give you an idea on how you will handle a bullying incident in the future, should it happen to you.

Know where you can file a complaint. Code of conducts, policy handbooks and service manuals define the process of grievance mechanisms, contents of formal complaints, and specify who are the disciplining authorities for each rank or position.

5.4 Exemplify professionalism, integrity and humility.

Present yourself in a professional manner at all time to avoid inappropriate jokes and pranks on you. Sometimes, it all begins with a small move of you, for a bully to pick and start a prank for others to laugh. Laughter brings joy to people and the source of that laughter has a chance to be repeated and escalate into bullying.

Being professional always leaves doubt for a workplace bully to upset you. It also draws support from other colleagues towards your side (if ever a bully attacks), especially if you established that you are serious with your job.

Don't waste your time on office politics. Concentrate instead on your goals and your vision by utilizing and upgrading your wisdom, knowledge and skills that will make you productive with outstanding performance and eventually make you a valued employee.

If you commit mistakes, accept it, and learn from it. Doing so is taking steps to freedom. Maintaining professional constancy in your workplace will help you build a good impression on your name.

Exemplify ethical and respectful behavior in your everyday interactions. In order to receive respect, you must learn how to give it first. These are few steps that you can take to lessen your chances of being bullied in your workplace.

5.5 Introduce your name through performance.

In the workplace, no matter how many diplomas and certificates you have, when it comes to performance evaluation, the only thing that will divide the boys from the men is results.

Your performance rating will ascertain who you are in your organization. Focus on your job description, duties and responsibilities then make the best of your ability to do your work and meet or even exceed expectations.

One tactic of bullies discussed in Chapter 2 is that they try to claim your work as their own. Keep track of your performances and achievements so you'll be able to push back if they try to undermine you.

If you submit accomplishment reports, or any report you make, always prepare an extra copy for yourself. Make it a habit to let the receiving person or office sign your receiving copy and keep it as a reference and proof. Do this in all your transactions as much as needed and possible.

Any achievement that you accomplish will be attached to your name. No one can take that away from you.

Once you are known because of how you perform, this will spread through word of mouth. You will be known by people whom you didn't even meet personally. Just by hearing your name alone, they have a perceived idea on who you are. This will make a workplace bully to think twice or even back off.

Other companies may even pirate you by offering higher salary and benefits just to have you join them because you are an asset that would contribute much to their organization.

5.6 Befriend your co-workers.

A workplace is a crossroad of people. You will be meeting people from diverse cultures. Be friendly and make new friends. Spread your acquaintances with people.

Find others who share the same values and interests with you. Remember, there are plenty of people out there who will love you and appreciate you for who you are. Just be true to yourself. Be wary and identify those whom you can trust from those you are doubtful.

Gather powerful allies before you need them. Co-worker friendships can help protect you from potential bullies down the road and will be powerful advocates on your behalf for other workplace matters.

Senior colleagues such as those with the company for long years are the experts of the workplace dynamics. If you have opportunity to come across these people, befriend them, and you'll learn a lot from them. They have a lot of stories to tell. They introduce you to other colleagues. They'll even tell you what to do if you're with Simon, and what to do if you're with Peter.

When I worked in the factory, I met Felix, who was the most senior employee. He was more senior in service than the Factory Manager. He always calls me to go with him, introduced me to a lot of people, and tell

stories about each of them. This helped me a lot in knowing my colleagues and appropriately dealing with them.

Even if your workplace becomes your favorite place to hang out, consider keeping some friends who don't work in the same place as you and put energy into those relationships.

5.7 Identify support groups

Find support from colleagues who are nice and don't resort to bullying. If you can help in any way you can, do it. Share your expertise by helping others. It is a great way to feel better about yourself and expand your social horizons.

Join the worker's union. A union is a legal organization authorized by law which represents the collective interests of employees. While the union's primary aim is to represent its members in negotiating benefits, it may include grievance mechanisms between rank and file employees and management staffs.

Search for organizations that provide support for workplace bullying, occupational health and safety, and mental health. Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI) is one of these. According to WBI, over 12,000 bullied individuals received personal advice by phone from them.

Join social media groups whose interests or concerns are the same as yours. You will encounter meaningful discussions and learn a lot.

When you are bullied, having trusted people you can lean on for support and encouragement will relieve your stress, increase your self-esteem and boost your resilience.

Don't hide your feelings from your loved ones. Let them know what you are going through. Talk to your family members, friends, former teacher, counselor, or other trusted adult. This doesn't mean that you are weak or there is something wrong with you. Sharing your thoughts and feelings to someone releases pent-up emotions and helps you relax.

On my own experience which I shared on page 5, my supportive allies were seniors in the company. Aside from Felix, which I mentioned earlier, there was Joe who happened to be the witness when I got bullied. These two colleagues were both close to the Factory Manager. My friendship with them proved the importance of support people that gave me strength and resilience.

5.8 Attend and participate in trainings

Attending and participating in trainings nourishes your well-being. You gain knowledge and wisdom in trainings. Remember, your knowledge and wisdom are necessary for your outstanding performance.

Whatever is the nature of the training, volunteer to attend if there is an opportunity. Showing your interest in trainings conveys enthusiasm and motivation to learn.

Take note that attending and participating are two different things. Attending is being there, physically present. Participating is active listening and involvement in activities. You should be involved in these two.

Attending trainings and workshops opens your mind to the unknown and boosts your confidence. The experience adds to the energy stored in your personal power.

You learn a lot from meeting people as there will be an exchange of ideas and perspectives. It's our nature as human beings to communicate with other people.

You will find this experience very helpful. You meet new friends. You gain knowledge and insights. You improve your weaknesses and even conquer your fears. You can find allies, support groups, or connections during trainings.

On my own experience, I didn't expect that my trainings, when I worked in a factory, will be useful in my future life endeavors. I applied what I learned from my trainings when I put up my own pastry bakeshop where I had 26 employees.

I applied my knowledge gained from my trainings when I put up Amlangan Lodge, my hotel business in Sagada, Mountain Province, a famous tourist destination in the Philippines.

5.9 Prepare a Plan B.

While attending and participating in trainings, you are expanding your knowledge, wisdom and skills. So, make it a habit to always update your resume.

Pursue higher adult education programs if you can. There is no age limit for education. These will strengthen your job marketability. Update yourself on current trends and embrace the reality.

Explore other job or business opportunities. However, be cautious on scams. Getting rich is no magic. You work for it.

On my first job, I learned about the hiring, one late afternoon. The following day, I took the exam. That was April. On May, I got a call for interview and on June, I was on board.

On my second job, I learned about the vacant position. I applied. On the following week, I was attending training.

Opportunities just pop up anytime. When this happens, it's nice to be ready and prepared.

On my experience which I shared on page 5, I reported my supervisor to our factory manager, the highest authority in the factory.

In this situation, most of you might just let this pass because you don't want to have conflicts with your superiors.

I also had this in mind before. I also had sleepless nights ruminating whether I had some shortcomings and why this happened to me, but I can't find any good reason for me to undergo this treatment and suffering.

So, I had to make a move. And I need to stand on my ground.

One thing that gave me courage to make this move was that I already had a **Plan B**.

I was ready for any situation even if it comes to worst.

Chapter 6

What Shall You Do If You Experience Workplace Bullying?

Have you internalized Chapters one, two and three?

Are you acquainted with your legal grounds in Chapter four?

Was Chapter five able to boost your resilience?

By now, even if you realize that you're experiencing bullying in the workplace, you won't freeze up because you have enough wisdom on the dynamics of people and the workplace.

Your wisdom reinforces your confidence.

Now, nourish your confidence, with these

7 Steps to Do When You Experience Workplace Bullying.

6.1 Assess the situation

Before you define what is happening, be sure to look at yourself and your own actions. Ask yourself what you have possibly done. You might have said something about yourself, in a joking manner, in front of co-workers.

Co-workers might have no ill intentions and think that you are okay even if they make fun of you. If this is the case, explain to them that you're not okay with their behavior. Consider the possibility that the person is unaware that what he is doing is upsetting you.

Not all bullies are bad people. Sometimes an average person loses his composure while being under pressure or stress. As a result, he unconsciously releases his emotions in an undesirable manner.

It is also possible that a colleague who shows undesirable behavior is even more tormented than you are, by life events you are not aware of. Learning more about this person or even talking to him in a friendly manner might

reveal life crisis he may be experiencing in the moment. Consider asking him if he is okay or is something bothering him.

If the problem appears to have more to do with the bully than it does with you, a little sympathy can make the behavior a little lighter for you to bear.

Offer your help if you can. If you will be able to help him, you will end up happier with a bigger heart.

The actions of a colleague may also come from his “blind spot”. Just make him aware that his actions are unacceptable. Regardless of how and why it had to happen, it is important to let your feelings be known even if you are sympathetic to what he is going through.

If it turns out to be unintentional and the good comes into his consciousness, he will probably apologize and back off.

6.2 Name your experience.

Each person is unique.

People have different degrees of sensitivity, and level of threshold on receiving undesirable behaviors. It follows that people have different coping mechanisms.

Now that you have assessed the situation by considering all possibilities, name now your experience.

What bullying behavior as discussed in **Chapter 1** have you experienced?

What type of bully as discussed in **Chapter 2** caused you this?

What effects as discussed in **Chapter 3** are you experiencing?

What specific legal provision as discussed in **Chapter 4** was violated?

Before you procrastinate, take your pen and write the incident in your diary.

6.3 Write the incident on your diary.

Have a diary and make it a habit to write on it. A diary containing your daily life events is a very powerful tool. Aside from its stress relieving effect whenever you write something, it hones your writing skills.

The Cautious Worker

Write down unusual events on your diary. Include your accomplishments, other positive experiences and memorable events in the diary. Reading them lifts you up when you're feeling down.

Write down bullying incidents that you encounter with specific details such as, date, time, nature of incident, and persons involved including witnesses.

Specify what each person did and said.

Creating a narrative record of incidents helps you evaluate whether the behavior is repeated, becoming worse, or a one-time occurrence. It provides evidence in the event you need to file a complaint.

You will be armed with facts.

A true to life story.

There is a true to life story of a Filipina who was brought to the United States by her Filipina-American townmate (in the Philippines) who promised her a bright future.

When they came to the United States, her recruiter didn't follow their agreement. Instead, she brought her to a far place and let her work as her housemaid. The worst thing was, her recruiter got her passport, didn't provide commensurate salary and enough food, prevented her to contact her family, and had been physically violent on her.

It was good that she met a young girl in the neighborhood, who observed what she was going through and made ways to help her get attention from authorities.

In court, she brought out her diary where she wrote all those incidents. The court accepted her evidences and put her perpetrators behind bars. She was granted U.S. citizenship and had been advocating against domestic violence.

6.4 Report the incident to proper authorities.

If you believe that you are being bullied or treated unfairly, bring it to the attention of your direct superior. However, make it sure you follow the protocol, comply the contents of a formal complaint and report to the proper authority.

Some leaders look on technicalities to nullify a complaint or neuter the situation by suggesting an amicable settlement.

On reporting incidents, start with the lowest level of authority who may be responsible to talk to the bully. He maybe your senior, team leader, foreman, group head, coordinator, line manager, supervisor, or whatever your organization calls it. If there is no action, or there is an action, but you are not satisfied, bring it to the next level.

Write a complaint letter detailing the incident. Include dates, place, time, and witnesses or bystanders.

Cite specific violations on code of conduct, ethical standards, laws, rules and regulations. Attach other evidences that would prove your claims. Along with showing your detailed accounts of the bullying situations, you can also suggest how you would like to see them handle the case, like for example, in accordance to the employee's code of conduct.

Make it sure to have a copy for yourself (receiving copy) to be signed by the person who receives your complaint.

Studies show that most victims of workplace bullying don't speak up. This is because they fear; losing their jobs, of retaliation, being embarrassed, to receive negative comments, or nothing will happen. Don't be one of them.

In my experience which I shared on page 5, the incident was reported to our supervisor, but he didn't act on it. He even aggravated the situation with his unprofessional comment, so I was prompted to report it to the factory manager.

6.5 Stand on your ground.

If you take an action and file a complaint, a workplace bully, sensing to be under hot water may come to ask for apologies, then beg you to withdraw your complaint. Be ready to stand on your ground.

Some organization leaders will just tell you to forgive the offender if he is their close ally. They may also be avoiding the issue to be known by higher offices because their leadership quality will be affected.

So, they might tell you to just resolve the conflict. Bear in mind that workplace bullying is not a conflict issue and cannot be resolved through

conflict resolution. It must be dealt in accordance with existing laws, policies, code of conducts, manuals or guidelines.

If you have every reason to believe that you face imminent threat and serious implications in the future, even if you're perfectly safe at the moment and you have a safe avenue for retreat, you should stand on your ground and let the bully face the consequences.

In my experience which I shared on page 5, I stood on my ground even if I was bumping the wall, a supervisor who has 18 years of service and most probably an asset to the company. I have with me a copy of the Company Handbook and the Code of Conduct which I used as basis for my legal ground.

The existentialists tell us that we have the freedom to choose, but we are held responsible for the consequences of our choices.

My observation.

In my professional observation in the academe, some teachers employ abusive behaviors to learners. While there is an existing Child Protection and Anti-bullying policy mandating a zero tolerance on these prohibited acts, organization leaders bend the law by filtering or manipulating the process. They just talk to the perpetrators instead of referring them to the disciplining authority.

These organizational leaders don't want the issue to reach higher offices because they fear that their leadership quality and the image of the organization will be affected. They advise offenders to ask for apologies from the victim and his/her family by reaching out to their homes.

When this happens, victims' parents usually don't stand on their grounds, for fear of retaliation that the offender and his allies might do to their child in the future.

So, they step back and withdraw their complaints, thinking to give the offender a second chance.

But this is wrong.

In this situation, they are giving the offender another chance to repeat his abusive behavior and hurt his next victim to be included in the statistics.

The Cautious Worker

As a result, the problem is not eradicated and only repeated because the offender is not sanctioned, and his offense is not put on record.

So long as no one is sanctioned, which would probably serve as an example to possible perpetrators, there will always be a victim, suffering at the losing end.

And the cycle continues.

Many people don't understand the emotional stress that the victim feels. How the pain refreshes whenever he sees the perpetrator, still boastful because nothing was done to correct his abusive behavior.

Recovery also depends on how it was resolved. And the psychological trauma will always be there like a stain.

Tip.

If you file a complaint, don't back off. I observed a lot of people, who are aggressive in the beginning but when the process starts, they back off. There are existing policies, so don't be afraid. These were put into existence to serve a purpose. Just be patient and observe protocols and process flows.

Sanctions were established as corrective measures for bad behavior. This process is an avenue for a change and not a death sentence so, do not pity the offender.

If you will be invited by bosses for a face-to-face conference with the bully, do your best to be polite. Calmly explain how you are affected with the behavior.

Avoid direct confrontation with bullies. This will excite them. It is what they want. You will be giving them what they are looking for.

Reserve your energy and talk during proper forums.

Never allow workplace bullying incidents to slip away without reporting them. Workplace bullies will most likely continue with their behavior so long as they know they can without reprimand or being corrected.

If you filed a complaint, organization leaders are obliged to act on it. If not, elevate to higher authorities.

Make it sure that your copy of the complaint was marked “RECEIVED” and signed by the person who received it. This conveys a message to higher authorities that it was reported down the line. It shows that the protocol was followed.

6.6 Take care of your health

Being bullied can break down your self-confidence. Be mindful of yourself if ever there would be changes. Watch out what you put into your body. Stay hydrated by drinking water throughout the day. Minimize drinking alcohol.

Have enough exercise. It boosts your self-esteem and confidence. Outdoor activities with friends or loved ones will be helpful. Having a punching bag at home takes off your anger in a healthy way.

Interact with people. This is where you need most your identified support groups discussed in Chapter 5. They serve as your sounding board.

Talk to trusted people. Expressing pent-up emotions make you feel better, even if it doesn’t change the situation. It helps you put things back in perspective.

If you are stressed, practice grounding by breathing slowly noticing your breaths. Slowly press your feet to the ground. Stretch your hands. Focus on the world around you and notice what you see, hear, smell, taste and touch. Then act towards your values.

Calm your mind.

Think of a specific time when you felt peaceful and calm. Try to remember exactly how it felt in your mind and body starting on your head or face going down slowly to your feet. Recall and recreate that calm feeling every time you need it.

Have some body movements to diffuse tensed emotions. If you are sitting, stand up and walk a few steps. Go out of the office or building to grasp

fresh air. You will have refreshed feeling and better focus when you get back.

Consider helping others if you can. Helping others uplifts your spirit. The feeling is incomparable giving you a break from any state of distress.

6.7 Move on with Plan B

In workplace bullying, if you can't neuter them, don't join them.

If you have done everything and exerted all your efforts yet you still feel unsafe, think again. Maybe it's about time to move on with Plan B.

With this book, I'm sure you will never be at a disadvantage except for covert attacks, because this is hard to detect. That's why Plan B is part of the game plan. Because work should not hurt.

It will never be right for you to work eight hours a day, five to six days a week, feeling uncomfortable and stressed. Consider transferring to other departments, division, areas, or stations.

If you consider packing your bags and look for another job, be cautious. Search for available opportunities before you leave your current job and not the other way around. Make sure an available one is waiting for you. Having no income for a month would be another stressful situation.

If you consider putting up your own business instead, establish first your business before you quit your job. Now, when is the right time to quit your job?

You may quit your job only if your established business is earning more, on a monthly basis, than what you are earning from your current job. Consider also the stability of your business.

For a point of reference, the COVID-19 pandemic showed to the world what businesses are crisis proof. While tourism, transportation, hotels and restaurants closed, grocery stores, drugstores and internet businesses flourished.

Chapter 7

Utilize Your Personal Powers

Did you know that you have your own power?

This is called personal power.

It is an inner strength and confidence that carries you forward through difficult times. It is a collective ability to handle problems with courage to make your own choices. Making a choice would mean taking something on or letting something go.

Unleash and develop your secret personal powers and use these to overcome people who mistreat you along the way.

Here are

7 Power Moves to Overcome Workplace Bullies

7.1 Restroom Retreat

How do you feel if you are being bullied? You feel uncomfortable. Now, to get rid of this discomfort, you can step aside. Calmly excuse yourself and leave.

This technique breaks the momentum of the attacker. Just do it respectfully by telling him you're going to the restroom even if you don't feel like going. No one could ever prevent you from responding to the call of nature. This is called the Restroom Retreat Strategy introduced by Robert Mueller.

However, if your bully is physically violent, don't go to the restroom where you may be followed, trapped, and attacked (as most school children do). This is very dangerous especially if there are no witnesses. Witnesses might also be scared or experience fear and leave you helpless.

You may also tell the bully that you have an appointment with someone, you're expecting a client or visitor, or there is a transaction you must attend to.

Look at your watch, excuse yourself, and leave.

Take out your phone, excuse yourself, tell him you have a call to attend, then leave quietly.

7.2 Communication Power

Communication is an exchange of information between individuals. We understand each other because of proper communication. We also find ourselves in conflict because of miscommunication.

The workplace bully may behave rudely because he lacks communication. Faced with complexities of living, he may be experiencing negativities in life but fails to articulate his experiences affecting his interactions with others.

People might misinterpret you because of the way you expressed your statement. It may be the way you said it, the words you used, or the tone of your voice. Remember that there is always a better way of saying things. Experts suggest that you limit the amount of information you share. Workplace bullies often use your own words as a weapon.

A senior colleague of mine, when I was in a sales division of a private firm, was a “wide mouthed gossip”, who always watch others’ negative words, then broadcasts loudly for the whole group to hear. Once he hears you utter a negative word towards yourself, or other people, he will take it from there and ignite the fire. Watch out for this kind of toxic person.

It is important to communicate well with people around the workplace. If someone does wrong on you, talk to him in a respectful way. Don’t be shy to speak up, even if he’s your boss. It needs courage to stand so long as you’re on the right track. No one has the right to mistreat you.

Communicating is different from confronting. It’s more of a friendly approach. You may be irked by the bully’s actions or words. But don’t put gas on a fire, put water instead. However, it needs impulse control.

Tell people how you feel so that they will understand you. They will come to their senses that they are not doing you good. This gives them the opportunity to change.

Be ready to accept your shortcomings too. It won’t put you down. Rather, it suggests a manifestation of your mindfulness and positive outlook.

Humility is a great virtue.

If you committed a mistake, apologize. It's nice to say, I'm sorry. It releases the negative energy while allowing positive energies to come in. Communicate respectfully to others all through out.

Now, if your verbal communication to a workplace bully doesn't work, step up and put it into writing. Do it as discussed in Chapter 6.

7.3 Power Words

Watch your words. Choose your words.

Did you know that there is power on the words you say?

Choose the words you use because the way you speak gives people an impression of you. If you pair this with good communication, it increases your self-confidence that makes people around you impressed. It shows to a workplace bully that you're someone not to be messed with.

According to Catherine Mattice Zundel (2012), a simple word like "yet" is vigorous and full of life than "*nevertheless*".

It's got power and glamour. "*We've got to cut costs in order to keep profits up,*" sounds more intense and persuasive than "*We've got to reduce costs to keep profits up.*"

Do you see the difference?

With words, you have the power to shut down workplace bullies and turn the table to your advantage. It involves your choice of words to use and prick the boastful ego of the bully.

The boastful ego of a workplace bully is just like a ball made of thin material and filled with nothing but air. Once it is pricked, air comes out and that ball will be nothing.

A workplace bully may sarcastically tell that you never do anything right. Try to turn the table on him by asking what he would have done differently so you will follow the example. If you counter this way and the bully has no evidence to present or has nothing constructive to say, he will be embarrassed and back off.

My experience.

One of the four salesmen, I had been working before, was a kind of guy who observes your weaknesses or mistakes and laughs on you. Then he broadcasts to other colleagues for everyone to laugh at. One evening before going home, we picked up his fiancée and went to a park. He ordered me to get off the truck so they can talk privately.

The following day, he asked me, “Gaius, what can you say about the girl I was with last night?” I answered, “Boss, she’s just fair for third prize.” there was silence, and I just focused on my driving. I observed that he didn’t talk to me much that day.

On the following day, he calmly told me, “Gaius, you know, I feel bad on you.” I was surprised and asked, “Why boss? Have I done something wrong?” He said, “I feel bad on you because of your remarks about my girl. I can’t accept your words that she’s just fair for third prize.”

I smiled, but deep inside me, I was laughing out loud (because he is a bully and a prank).

He continued, “I wish you should have said that she’s fair for first prize, so I could have felt better.” Then, he went on begging, “Can you please apologize to me?” I immediately told him, “I’m very sorry boss. My apologies. I had no intentions to offend you.” He ended by thanking me, “At least, I feel better now, so I can move on.”

From thereon, he stopped his bullying tactics on me and after a month, he paid me my per diems which he had deprived me for four months.

You see?

Our words are powerful.

What I told him was just the first thing that came out of my mind. But it hit the bull’s eye and turned the table to my favor. His boastful ego was neutered by those words and I regained my self-confidence.

Since then, I had been using this for my mind trick on him. I just recall that scenario and I feel protected from any prank that would come from him. On the other hand, he is cautious to play pranks on me because he knows that I have something to counter him.

7.4 Power Smile

There is great power found within a smile. A smile imparts feelings of happiness and friendliness. It stimulates positive interactions.

Smiling boosts your immune system because your whole body relaxes when you smile. When you're in a bad moment, smile and it will immediately improve your mood. Smiling relieves your stress.

A smile helps to generate more positive emotions within you. It improves the quality of your life. It makes people around you feel safer. It reduces hostility and anger. It helps you face negative emotional events.

Smiles are contagious. ...

When you smile at someone, they are likely to start smiling as well. Not only is your smile boosting your mood, but also making a positive impact on another person.

In a bullying situation, the bully wants to see a negative impact of his behavior on you. He wants you to get stressed (sad, annoyed, humiliated, intimidated, embarrassed, threatened, fearful, etc.)

But, if you smile at him, things will become different. Why? Because, he doesn't see his desired results on you. He doesn't see you being affected. He will be frustrated and be the one to get annoyed.

The table will be turned around against him. He will be spending his time thinking why you were not affected. So, he'll come to think of another technique, way, or chance to do his act. And if he can't get you, he will leave you and look for another target to prey on.

One great technique to relieve stress is to think about a funny memory that always makes you smile. Remember funny things that happened in your life, funny stories that you heard, or funny events that you witnessed. You may also search for funny videos on youtube.

My experience.

Mr. F was a “terror” supervisor at the company which I used to work before. He was a famous boss because of his attitude. He would yell on you and tell you things even elephants don’t want to hear. Everyone was afraid of him and was very cautious in interacting with him.

But there was Mr. A, a salesman, who just smiled at him, and kept smiling at him even if he’s getting mad telling a lot of bad words. One afternoon, when Mr. A was not in the office Mr. F asked the group. “Where is Mr. A? What is within that person? Why is he not bothered even if I get angry at him? I tell him bad words that even a dog can’t swallow, but he still smiles at me.”

Then we all smiled.

In this situation, the target showed to his perpetrator that he is not bothered at all. As if nothing is happening. It’s a mind trick.

On the other hand, the perpetrator can’t see his desired result to his target. His ego was neutered.

So, there you go.

A smile of a lamb abates a tiger’s wrath.

Bring out the power of your smile.

7.5 Humor Power

Nature gave us a powerful tool for dealing with stress – a sense of humor. Humor is both a shield and a weapon. It has the power to alleviate pain and can threaten the evil. Humor lightens your burdens, brings hope, connects you to others, and keeps you mindful, focused, and alert. It also helps you calm down and forgive easier.

Humor helps reduce some of the damage caused to a victim’s psychological well-being by reinforcing their sense of power. This is important in workplace bullying because when you get yelled at, you feel belittled, you feel weaker. Humor helps to neutralize this by making you feel more empowered.

According to studies and researches, laughter has been shown to reduce stress, boost the immune system and enhance brain chemistry through the release of serotonin and endorphins. It is a very effective means of dealing with heightened emotion and taking control of a situation.

Laugh at dismal situations rather than grieving them. Look for the humor in a negative situation and reveal the irony and absurdity of life. Laughter is a strong medicine. It relieves pain and protect you from the damaging effects of stress. A good laugh brings your mind and body back into balance.

The ability to laugh easily and frequently is a superior technique to overcome problems and enhance your physical and mental health.

Best of all, this precious medicine is free and user-friendly.

What do some well-known personalities say about humor?

“A well-developed sense of humor is the pole that adds balance to your steps as you walk the tightrope of life.” – **William Arthur Ward**

“You can turn painful situations around through laughter. If you can find humor in anything, even poverty, you can survive it.” – **Bill Cosby**

“There is no defense against adverse fortune which is so effectual as a habitual sense of humor.” – **Thomas W. Higginson**

“The more I live, the more I think that humor is the saving sense.” – **Jacob August Riis**

“Imagination was given to man to compensate him for what he is not; a sense of humor to console him for what he is.” – **Francis Bacon**

“If I had no sense of humor, I would long ago have committed suicide.” – **Mohandas Gandhi**

“I think the next best thing to solving a problem is finding some humor in it.” – **Frank Howard Clark**

“Humor is mankind’s greatest blessing.” – **Mark Twain**

“A person without a sense of humor is like a wagon without springs. It’s jolted by every pebble on the road.” – **Henry Ward Beecher**

7.6 The Mind Power

Mind power is one of the strongest and most useful powers you possess. It is composed of your attention, your mental images and your thoughts. Thoughts are energy. Though invisible, our mind and thoughts have the capability to penetrate deeply and thoroughly that it can affect reality. Just like the wind, which is invisible, but can be powerful, so are your mind and thoughts.

7.6a The Mind Trick

In the Star Wars universe, Jedi Knights use this trick by implanting a suggestion in the minds of those they encounter, encouraging them to comply with their wishes. This is called the Jedi Mind Trick. They wave a couple of fingers in front of the stormtroopers and dictate, “These are not the droids you are looking for.” The stormtrooper follows by repeating their words, “These are not the droids we are looking for.” Then allows them to move on.

Mind Tricks are real. You can also apply the same tricks to your mind as well as to the bully. This is a kind of communication technique to help you reach your goals by suggesting an idea into the bully’s mind.

For example, if a bully tries to attack you face-to-face with unwanted remarks or non-verbal intimidation, you can counter by telling him he’s got dirt on his face. His focus, which was earlier directed on you, will be reverted to himself, wondering how he looks, taking out his hanky to wipe his face, or checking it out on a mirror. While he is being bothered, it gives you chance to step aside and by the time he regains his composure, you are already several meters away.

It may require proper timing. The goal is to neuter the boastful ego of the bully. Reminding him that he also has a downside will slow him down.

You can use this mantra when a verbal bully attacks you, “No person can harm me. So, if you are yelling and trying to embarrass me, you are just one noisy loudspeaker in the public market, and no one is even listening to you.” Ignore it and show to the person, you’re not affected. Frustrating the bully on his intentions will slow him down.

Another way is to flatter your bully with comments on; how he looks (such as; “You look so energized today. Can you tell me about your secret?”); what he did (such as; “Congratulations! You’re smart.”), and what he has (such as; “Your necklace is elegant. Seems expensive.”). The bully’s mind will focus on himself instead of his tactics on you. A bully’s intent is to stand above you, so before he acts on his negative ways to get it, give that feeling to him even if your comments are not true at all.

So long as your health and safety are not at risk, you may suggest a humor into the scene. Think that your attacker is naked, imagine his head as a cabbage ball, or his nose grows in length every time he talks.

7.6b The Mind Block

Mind Trick is fun if you are the one using it. But workplace bullies can also use it against you. It’s usually used to beat people down making them feel bad about themselves. It comes in the form of harsh statements such as; “You’re not good at that.”, “You know nothing about that.”, “Your outfit doesn’t look good on you.”, “You’re just not good enough.”

These statements are demoralizing and can be hard to resist. If you are targeted with this technique, you may ruminate on the negative statement, and unconsciously look for confirming examples. You may tend to give away your truth and let the bully define reality for you. You may start changing the way you feel and act as if the statement of the bully is true, even if it isn’t.

Once you give away your emotional power to the bully, control of your behavior usually follows. If you start to lose your belief in your inherent worth, you’ll start treating yourself negatively. You may stop your daily routine, feel anxious, stressed, and depressed.

No one should tell you what to think and feel. You should be the expert on you and the world around you.

If a **bully uses the Mind Trick**, you can **counter with the Mind Block**.

Recognize that what workplace bullies say is not true, it’s a tactic designed to undermine you. Perceiving it this way will decrease its impact on you, giving you the power to react effectively.

In the Mind Block, you need to enhance your imagination. If you can imagine yourself being hit with words, you can imagine blocking them.

Think of a bully proof cover that is surrounding your body such as a shield, a ball of rubber or glass, a dome tent, or maybe your umbrella. Imagine it as a hard, glowing, and slippery object in its exterior part, but a comfortable and cool place inside. Now, imagine that these unwanted, unkind words are coming towards you, but cannot penetrate and are just bouncing back leaving you safe and unhurt.

This may need some practice. Once your mind is used to it, you can instantly utilize it in a second. You can use this anytime and anywhere. Sometimes, unpleasant experiences flashback on our minds when we find ourselves alone or wake up in the middle of the night. Think of your mind block, take some deep breathes, then ground yourself to normal breathing. Mindfulness of airflow in breathing is also a relaxation technique.

7.7 The Power of Prayer

Prayer is a powerful instrument. Praying will give you the strength to stand up for yourself without losing your dignity. When workplace bullies and toxic people realize you have the strength and courage, they will back off. They will see your strong will and know they won't be able to intimidate you.

Be strong and mindful enough to resist the urge to fight back or cower in submission. Fighting back physically or with a sharp tongue is never the answer. To become submissive to a workplace bully and toxic person is not, either.

One of the best ways to overcome a workplace bully is to stand firm and assert your calm strength. Let workplace bullies know their actions are not hurting you, they are just hurting themselves.

Bear in mind that the workplace bully's actions are motivated by insecurities. Pray for him. Ask God to help you find balance between weakness and aggressiveness. No matter your situation is, one thing you should do is allow God to lead the way.

"I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy, to be praised: so, shall I be saved from mine enemies." - Psalms 18:3

Pray for your Bully.

1. It would be a human reaction to be afraid. Don't be afraid! Learn this scripture and speak it aloud to remove the fear.

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." - 2 Timothy 1:7

2. Even though you may feel powerless in this situation remember that God is ultimately in control. Focus your heart and mind on Him and know that he will protect you.

"Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." - Deuteronomy 31:6

3. You must tell someone and not just anybody but someone who is in authority or has the power to change the situation for you.

"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed." - Proverbs 15:22

4. Pray for the Bully. Prayer changes things and it can also change the heart of a person. Ask God to bless the bully and enlighten him to figure out his struggles in life. Ask him to give you dreams, visions or words of wisdom on how to respond to the person that is bullying you.

"I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me." - Psalm 16:7

5. If you cannot avoid going to a place where there are bullies, don't go alone. Go with friends, co-workers or others so that you have witnesses if something happens.

"Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." - Ecclesiastes 4:12

CONCLUSION

Your wisdom on how to be a cautious worker will be your shield from workplace bullying behaviors and the impact of its damaging effects. Being smart and prepared maintains your peace of mind, placing you on total advantage.

Knowing the facts about workplace bullying; discovering the dynamics of the workplace and the bullies; understanding the attributes of bullied people; knowing your legal grounds; boosting your resilience in the workplace; knowing what to do, how to do it, when to do it, and where to go in case the workplace bully attacks; and developing to use your secret intrinsic powers; will protect yourself from workplace bullying, putting you on a sturdy safe place of

CONFIDENCE, PEACE AND HAPPINESS

the greatest position every worker aspires in the workplace.

Act now and ward off those workplace bullies
because

“work should not hurt”

(Workplace Bullying Institute, 2020).

Prevention is better than **cure**.

So,

Every single move counts.

Remember this.

“The journey to **one thousand miles** starts with a **single step**.

And,

the **mighty tree** came from a **tiny seed**.”

(World Health Organization, 2020)