

Greetings from bullyland.

We didn't send out a newsletter for January, so a belated Happy New Year.

Five items this month.

- 1./ Vancouver Area Meeting dates
- 2./ Bullying and climate change.
- 3./ In the news
- 4./ No Bully For Me survey
- 5./ Knowing more before you join
- 6./ Vicki O'Brien piece from BC business magazine

1./ Next two Vancouver Area Meetings - what are you waiting for.....

The next two Vancouver area meetings will be on the THIRD Saturday of each month, that is Saturday February 17th, and Saturday March 17th - nice and easy to remember!

The meetings are held between 11am and 1pm at the:

(Edited: details of Vancouver area meetings for subscribers.....)

The meetings are a safe and supportative place to share your story, discuss some of their similarities and even remember how to smile or even laugh.....

For details of other local groups check our local groups (duh) page

<http://www.nobullyforme.ca/local.shtml>

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2./ Bullying and climate change.

At the end of this month's newsletter is a reprint of the Vicki O'Brien piece on Bad and Good bosses published in BC Business Magazine. Vicki used interviews with several of our members in her research for the article.

Vicki sent us a copy to do with as we wish (thanks Vicki!), so there it is in full at the end of this message (full except for some visuals referred to but absent).

Yes, it confirms there are bad bosses and good bosses and they can fall into different categories.

Why do we continue to work for the bad ones? It only encourages them.

The current discussion on climate change too often focuses on what government should do and how 'industry' and 'big business' are to blame, rather than concentrate on our responsibilities and our power to change things for ourselves.

Climate change will only be halted or eventually even reversed if we take greater responsibility for each tiny action we take, each degree we turn down our thermostat, each decision not to encourage transporting lettuce 3000 miles by simply not buying it, each time we refuse to buy bottled water, each time we walk instead of drive.

We can blame 'industry' and 'big business' but who the h*ll do you think buys the products and services of these companies? You do, I do, we do.

So there are two alternatives if you believe change is required. You can either simply stop buying the products of unhealthy enterprises, or you can make it clear to them what changes you expect from them if they expect you to continue buying their goods and services.

So it is with climate change, so it is with workplace bullying - think global and act local.

Study examples of good workplace practice from around the world, and educate yourself in applying them locally, in your own place of work, and those of your friends and family members. Apply these good practices not just in unhealthy workplaces which clearly need change, but in all workplaces - don't wait for signs of toxicity before employing good practice. (The sea level where I live hasn't changed yet so I don't need to worry...)

You can decide to make positive change in your workplace and refuse to encourage bad bosses and workplaces.

You can do this by not working for the bad bosses or in the bad workplaces.

You have the same two alternatives as with climate change - stay and try to improve the situation, or refuse to encourage it and simply get out.

Yes 'someone should do something about' both climate change and workplace bullying, and that someone is you.

Stephen Hill
February 2007

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3./ Workplace bullying in the news.

News items on workplace bullying have perhaps doubled in quantity over the last year.

Whether they add to the sum of knowledge and awareness, or simply repeat the same tired formulas, depends on the ones you read.

It does seem that part of the growth in attention is a blurring of the distinction between bullying and harassment.

The key distinction should be that bullying is about what you do and how you behave and harassment is about what and/or who you are.

So even the recent behavior on the silly Celebrity Big Brother 'reality' show in the UK, where a contestant of Indian origin was picked on and had her accent and diet and name ridiculed, was described as 'bullying'.

It wasn't.

If someone is called lazy that can be bullying, if someone is called (forgive the usage) a lazy Chinese or black or bitch and so on, then this is harassment.

I believe it is important for us to maintain this distinction to prevent every piece of bad behavior being called workplace bullying, and diluting our knowledge of the specific damage which this behavior can have, and thus the specific healing it requires.

A reminder, you can easily find the latest news items by running a 'Google' search for workplace

bullying.

Put quotes around the phrase for greater accuracy.

Here is the link ready to go:

Google news search for "workplace bullying"

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4./ Our NBFM Canadian survey on workplace bullying is continuing.

We are approaching 1000 submissions when we will assemble statistics and publicize a formal launch of the findings.

Please do all you can to stimulate submissions - colleagues, present or former, and don't forget to send it to your union.

Link to the No Bully For Me survey on workplace bullying

<http://www.nobullyforme.ca/cgi-bin/esurvey.cgi?action=viewSurvey&id=1123717>

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5./ Knowing more before you join

There are no guarantees but clearly the more you know about a workplace before you join it the more likely you are to have a chance to spot an unhealthy workplace.

Thorough questions asked at the interview stage can help; talking with some current employees won't hurt.

Joining temporarily on a practicum placement is excellent; can you volunteer as a precursor to being employed there?

The COBS bakery chain have a different take on this.

You have try out.

But it's not one of those where you are being almost baited into making a mistake by the over attention.

No, it's called a 'DOT' - a Demonstration of Talent.

A chance to 'strut your stuff' - 'I'm here for my demonstration of talent....' has an empowering ring to it.

Not only that but they ask what size you are before you show up.

Why? Because they have a uniform in your size waiting for you so you don't look like the guy in street clothes here for the try out, but a possible new team member playing their part.

Does this mean that it is a perfectly healthy place to work? There is no way to tell.

If it does indicate a healthy place to work, will it stay that way?

Of course not, because workplaces, just like relationships, change all the time.

Sometimes for better, sometimes for worse, you change as does everyone else.

But getting closer and seeing what response you get to the greater intimacy is certainly worth the effort.

Companies who encourage more contact, outside the formal interview, before hiring are showing they care about a good fit and this is a healthy sign.

Happiness at work is about more than the dough. (sorry)

Stephen
Feb 2007

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6./ Vicki O'Brien piece from BC business magazine

(follows:.....)

Bad boss bad boss... Watcha gonna do?

From Dilbert in the funny pages to TV's The Office, we love to poke fun at cringe-worthy bosses. But for some people, these jerks are no laughing matter. Why do corner office boneheads feel the need to bolster their own self-esteem by frustrating or intimidating the rest of us? We offer some insight into the bad-boss psyche and tips on how to survive the experience – with your career in tact

by Vicki O'Brien

Welcome to the workplace from hell. On any given day the boss flies into a screaming tantrum, kicking or hitting staff over minor infractions. She rules with an iron fist, berates and belittles employees in public, hires and fires at whim and refuses references to those who quit in disgust.

Demoralized staffers describe this Lower Mainland business owner as a petty tyrant. She terrorizes her team, leaving them suffering from headaches, sleep deprivation and depression, writes Steve, one of more than two dozen British Columbians who responded to a BC Business call for bad boss stories. He says hundreds of talented people have revolved through her doors in the past five years, many fired on their first day on the job. (There are less than 20 full-time workers on her company payroll.) Current and former employees routinely meet off-site to offer each other moral support and debrief on their treatment in this bizarre and toxic workplace, he adds. "If you want to hear more, just let me know. We could get enough people together to fill a ballroom."

Back in August, we canvassed our online contacts and left messages on local websites asking for bad boss anecdotes. It wasn't designed to be a scientific poll: human nature being what it is we expected—and received—a number of largely amusing gripes about rude, arrogant, incompetent leaders. Over the years we have experienced plenty of those ourselves. But we did not expect to hear so many detailed, compelling stories of serially abusive leaders whose outrageous behaviour seems to be damaging employee health and by default, their company's bottom line.

By our deadline, 18 people (plus three from outside BC) had nervously contacted us, describing years of serious harassment or bullying. While they were afraid we would identify them, or the employer involved, they seemed anxious to talk about their experience in order to expose their boss's behaviour and help other people. "I'm sure that others have worse stories but the shock of being disrespected, personally attacked, treated unfairly and not seen as a person in your place of work has huge psychologically damaging effects on you," writes Janet, who works for a Vancouver-based engineering firm.

Four of our respondents used pseudonyms and 'hidden' email addresses. Two were so afraid of being recognized that they opted to contact us only by telephone, 'deep throat' style, and would not divulge their real name, even when guaranteed anonymity. (In the end, given the level of concern surrounding this issue, we agreed to change the names of all our bad boss victims and disguise the workplaces

involved.)

While some report still working for the company where they experienced their abuse, most have moved on, either quitting when the workplace finally became unbearable or after taking formal action and reaching a settlement with their employer. Six say cruel and unusual treatment by their boss left them temporarily unable to work and required counseling and medical help to recover. While we can't substantiate these claims, it's clear from the obvious emotional pain and fear of reprisal out there that this subject touched a nerve. Despite corporate Canada's commitment to ethics and values, it seems that bad bosses, both male and female, continue to operate relatively unchecked.

Dysfunctional, controlling bosses like Steve's are especially prevalent in entrepreneurial ranks, says Richard Hart, a lawyer, mediator and consultant with Pro-Active Resolutions, a Vancouver firm specializing in workplace conflict. "Some entrepreneurs don't put much stock in the HR function," he notes. "They may have poorly developed supervisory skills and because the business is their 'baby,' often subscribe to the 'my way or the highway' leadership style," he says. "If employees can't live with their demanding boss, or create the change they need, their only option is to move on."

Conflict resolution experts, such as Hart and Larry Axelrod, of Vancouver's The Neutral Zone (who with Rowland Johnson co-authored *Turning Conflict into Profit – A Roadmap for Resolving Personal and Organizational Disputes*), say tyrannical leaders are also prevalent in unionized strongholds, such as government agencies, hospitals, schools and universities, where they can be very tough to dislodge.

Fighting the system can be costly both emotionally and financially, writes Sheila, a provincial government worker in northern B.C. who experienced extensive harassment at work. "Eventually, following an internal investigation, my supervisor resigned. However, I received no compensation because of the harassment/bullying and it cost me over \$6,000 in medical, lost wages and lawyer fees. I was represented by a union but the support I got was minimal and even though the union was aware of this supervisor and her tactics they could do nothing to stop what was going on." Sheila says the experience affected her career, her health and her young family. "What hurt the most was not being there for them for a good part of a year as I struggled back from depression."

Hart and Axelrod, who work predominantly with employers and have each mediated hundreds of employee/boss conflicts in B.C. and other jurisdictions, believe that for the most part there are no bad bosses, only bad behaviours. They stress that in all but the very worst cases, if we make an effort to understand what motivates our boss, recognize the role we play in a toxic workplace and improve the way we communicate and manage conflict, we can transform our working relationships and turn a bad boss into one of the good guys.

"Sometimes employees like what they do and have enough autonomy to tolerate a bad boss," says Axelrod. "But if people feel their relationship with the boss is affecting their health and well-being or ability to contribute fully to the organization, we advise them to take control and act strategically." (For the skinny on how to finesse a sit down with your supervisor, see *SIDEBAR* p. xx.)

If you think you have the boss from hell, you aren't alone. A bad boss contest held this summer by Working America, an affiliate of the US federation of labour organizations, AFL-CIO, attracted 2,500 entries. And the winner? A dentist who callously docked money from employees' pay cheques to cover client cancellations on 9/11.

Over the last 20 years, dozens of books have been written on the subject of lousy supervisors, designed to help us cope with bosses who run the gamut from ignorant, incoherent, and crude to indecisive, deceitful, vindictive and manipulative. After immersing ourselves in all this bad boss lit, we opted to simplify things and describe six types that we find especially challenging, plus offer tips from the experts on how to survive, if not thrive, on their watch.

The Jerk, aka The Incompetent

We can all be a jerk from time to time, so we know it when we see it. It's the people who behave like jerks all day, every day that drive us nuts at the office. A jerk's top priorities are the bottom line and doing whatever it takes to look good in front of his subordinates and superiors.

Jerks, who most of us view as thoughtless, rude and unprofessional, may get their jobs through

connections rather than aptitude and will try to hide their incompetence by overloading the rest of us. Full of bluster, they are often technologically challenged but aware of the hottest business trends, even though they rarely understand them.

While some jerks take pride in their bad behaviour, others, like Dilbert's boss, simply lack normal self awareness and are hopeless at reading people and social situations. Jerks often project well to superiors but foment trouble in the trenches by continually nitpicking, badmouthing certain team members and showing favouritism.

Incompetent bosses thrive in companies that don't believe in supervisory training. They are often introverts, initially drawn to science or technology, then promoted for their technical savvy. As you'd expect, the high-tech world is full of them. Incompetents have no corporate vision and make lousy leaders. Their workplace is often full of ambiguity, inconsistency, uncertainty and insecurity. Teams are often in a state of chaos because their boss has lousy interpersonal communication and conflict resolution skills.

Axelrod says our fear of confrontation and feelings of powerlessness often prevent us from tackling these bad bosses. We would rather complain about our boss behind his back, and put our health at risk, than face him and honestly describe how his management style affects efficiency. "Ninety per cent of the time, if it's done well, the boss will respond well," says Axelrod. "People with strong personalities don't understand or respect passivity. In most cases, your boss wants you to be assertive and challenge him."

The Control Freak aka The Micromanager

Your boss is on a short fuse. She loses her temper when people make mistakes, constantly worries about the department's performance and hovers over you to make sure you do your job properly, which of course means doing it her way.

Control freaks are compulsive workaholics driven by the need for perfectionism and orderliness. Deep down, these people are terrified of appearing vulnerable and may be under a lot of pressure from their own supervisors. Because they are riddled with anxiety and fear, and are deathly afraid their flaws will be exposed, they are unable to trust or delegate.

Control freaks and micromanagers may not recognize their own behavior, but if you point it out to them in a respectful way, are usually open to working with you to improve efficiency. "Don't be afraid of the boss," says Axelrod. "Instead of sitting back judging and criticizing him, 'lean in' to the situation by sitting down with him and asking why he feels you need such close supervision. Request an opportunity to complete a task on your own and review what went right and what went wrong. There's very little risk in doing that. If he knows you want to help him achieve his objectives, he will probably thank you for it."

The Bully

Nadia's boss was nicknamed The Teflon Man. "In the beginning, we got along really well. When I first noticed things going off the rails I approached him and asked him if I had done something wrong. He turned beet red and refused to talk about it," says Nadia, who contacted us tentatively by email after our request for bad boss stories appeared on the website discovervancouver.com.

She describes how 'The Teflon Man' targeted only competent managers with successful personal lives. After complimenting Nadia on her work, (she was a senior administrator in a provincial government agency) he criticized and undermined her to her colleagues. He constantly kept her off guard by changing terms of contracts she was negotiating, excluding her from key meetings, cutting her budget, withholding information she needed to do her job and frequently moving her office. Even though other senior managers were targeted and, like Nadia, experienced severe work-related stress, this bad CEO survived. "He's since moved on to another organization," she reports, "and I hear that the same sort of destruction is happening all over again."

Bullying runs from overt threats of violence to subtle and menacing use of words and gestures. While bully bosses are split evenly between the sexes, they generally victimize women. International

research-- to date mainly from Australia, the U.K. and the U.S. -- suggests that bullying and general hostility in the workplace is four times more prevalent than discrimination and sexual harassment. While Canadian data on the subject is minimal, Australian researcher Paul McCarthy estimates that, factoring in absenteeism, turnover, stress-induced illness, lost productivity and anxiety-related accidents, workplace bullying costs Canadian companies close to \$20,000 per employee, per year.

Like their playground counterparts, bully bosses tend to be insecure, with poor or non-existent social skills and little empathy, says Hart. They turn this insecurity outwards, finding satisfaction in controlling, attacking and diminishing accomplished members of the team or quiet introverts at the other end of the spectrum. Their weapons of choice are unjustified criticism, humiliation, and isolation.

Unfortunately, bullies often have supporters in high places and may blacken a victim's reputation before he plucks up courage to 'leapfrog' the boss or take legal action. Far too many companies still tolerate, even reward, bullying bosses, Hart says. "Bullying is essentially a cowardly behaviour. If you're a victim, it may help to summon your courage and challenge the bully. Let your boss know the behavior is unacceptable and that you will not tolerate it. If it continues, you have to decide if it's worth fighting and risking your health."

If you are a bullying victim, or are witnessing a bullying situation and don't know what to do, you can find valuable information and support at nobullyforme.ca, formed in 2003 by two Vancouverites who experienced extensive bullying and psychological harassment at work.

The Narcissist

In the beginning, John seemed like the perfect new sales manager for a booming technology business in Vancouver's downtown core. An outside recruiter enthusiastically described him as leadership material: personable, creative, energetic and ambitious, so his senior VP expected great things.

However, within months, John's management style began to raise eyebrows. His personal assistant quit, as did the next one he hired. Without consultation he arbitrarily decided to rid his department of 'deadwood,' tried to avoid low profile corporate assignments, bullied and harangued colleagues and subordinates, withheld information from his boss and created tension throughout the organization. When his VP, frustrated by John's arrogance, took his concerns to the CEO, he immediately came under fire: everything was his fault. John had got there first.

Ironically, while narcissism is considered a serious personality disorder, leaders with narcissistic traits are still viewed as a hot commodity by some in the corporate world. Narcissists (named for Narcissus, the mythological Greek figure who fell in love with his own reflection) are personified by slick, power-hungry Gordon Gekko in the 1987 blockbuster Wall Street. Narcissistic bosses appear motivated and capable, brimming with confidence and charisma. They are often fast-tracked by a mentor, and thrive as salesmen, entrepreneurs, surgeons and politicians.

In reality narcissists are poor team players and often surround themselves with yes-men, who do their bidding without question, says Axelrod. They are exploitative, envious and haughty with a strong sense of entitlement. Its useless trying to befriend or flatter a narcissist: they quickly tire of compliments and people. Also, never, ever confide in them: they will probably use personal information against you. As Gordon Gekko liked to sneer, "If you want a friend, get a dog."

Axelrod and Hart also warn us not to try reasoning with a narcissistic boss: he may well fly into a rage when frustrated, contradicted or confronted. Coping with narcissists is a full-time, energy and emotion-draining job, they say, which can reduce you to an insecure nervous wreck. If you tend to be submissive and have few expectations from your career, you might survive. But most people who stay in such an abusive, traumatic environment wind up sick, or inevitably butt heads with the boss and end up being demoted, reassigned, relocated, or fired.

The Creepster

Your creepster boss thinks he's a great guy. He loves telling sexually explicit jokes, sends questionable emails to team members and shows no remorse when told his humour leaves people uncomfortable. If you protest, he'll probably urge you to "lighten up and get a sense of humour."

He may be amused by T and A posters in the lunch room, even if it contravenes company policy. He often has no appreciation of personal space, and thinks it's OK to comment on female body parts or engage in inappropriate touching, such as brushing past women coworkers way too close for comfort. Some lesser-creepsters just don't realize how bad they are, says Hart, and can be rehabilitated – if the organization has the will. However, unrepentant types permit and support environment where sexism, racism and homophobia can flourish virtually unchecked.

Susan's sexual harassment began slowly. "At first, I thought I'd found a mentor," she says. "This senior person from head office picked me out of a crowd of other managers and started complimenting my work. Then he began complimenting me personally, bringing inappropriate gifts, forcing me to work late then pressuring me to join him for dinner and threatening my job if I didn't go."

Susan tried doing the right thing, first by approaching him directly, then when nothing changed, going to his boss. No one helped, she says, except one female manager who caught him trying to stop Susan from getting into her car after she'd been working late in the lab. Soon afterwards, her Good Samaritan left the company.

Susan tried to become invisible. "I did everything I could to make him stop noticing me. When he'd compliment me on my hairstyle or outfit, I'd never wear it that way again. I became so dowdy that friends and co-workers in other departments barely recognized me."

Eventually, the boss admitted he wanted to "court" her. "When I told him it would never happen, he took out his anger on me and my staff in various ways, including making our jobs impossible by micro-managing." After two years of harassment, she made an official complaint and threatened to call the police. Her harasser was finally transferred elsewhere in the company.

Under the law, men as well as women can be victims of sexual harassment but in reality women are harassed 98 per cent of the time. If you are being sexually harassed, never stay silent hoping it will stop, warns Hart. "If you don't take a firm, proactive stand the behaviour will only escalate. Call your boss on his actions right away, ask that it stop and warn him that if it happens again, you will report it. If it continues, do just that. Under B.C.'s Human Rights legislation, employers have to take your complaint seriously and investigate."

The Psychopath

Is your boss Machiavellian: a pathological liar, riddled with superficial charm and insincerity? Is he egocentric, manipulative, exploitative, grandiose, controlling and dictatorial? Does he lack any sort of human empathy or remorse? Does he have zero insight into his behaviour, believing the end always justifies the means? You might just be working for a psychopath.

Robert Hare can tell you. Hare, 68, is a UBC professor emeritus and internationally renowned expert in psychopathy who regularly consults with the FBI. He expected to be comfortably retired by now but instead he's in constant demand by law enforcement agencies and academics across the globe and willingly adheres to a punishing travel schedule to expose what he describes as the "monsters" in our midst.

In their recently published book, *Snakes in Suits: When Psychopaths Go to Work*, Hare and Paul Babiak, an industrial-organizational psychologist, paint a chilling picture of the corporate psychopath. Spotting one isn't easy: like the narcissist, he presents such a perfect picture of an ideal, well-rounded job candidate that even seasoned interviewers can be fooled.

In the '70s, Hare developed what's known as the psychopathy checklist, or PCL, which is used as the international standard by police and mental health professionals to determine who qualifies as a psychopath. He has spent much of his career inside prisons, studying hardcore criminal psychopaths, mostly murderers and serial rapists.

In recent years he has shifted focus to the workplace. The goings-on at WorldCom and Enron served as near-perfect examples. He estimates that about one per cent of the general population are psychopaths but in a large unstable company, characterized by acquisitions, takeovers, downsizing and management shifts, that number may go as high as five per cent.

"If you are in the jungle and you are a tiger, where do you go? To watering holes and feeding grounds. Psychopaths are very intelligent: they're going where the action is, which includes such fertile environs as old VSE and the new TSX Venture market." He feels strongly that people who bilk investors or bring down companies are worse than murderers and rapists because they do incredible damage to hundreds of people and generally escape punishment because they look good in a suit. Hare says it's "idiotic" to sit down and try to reason with a psychopathic boss because they don't play by the rules. "If you say something or complain, you could be in big trouble. Even if you try and let other people know what's going on, you're probably playing against a stacked deck. Psychopaths like to separate people into groups and play them off against each other."

As far as any strategizing goes: "Well if you're a religious person, I suppose you could pray, or go see a counselor or lawyer," he adds. "If you believe half of what I say about them in my book, you should be terrified."

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We live in a time when bosses are under pressure from all sides and it's not surprising that many are finding it hard to live up to often unrealistic expectations. Both Axelrod and Hart remind us that it's hard work, thankless even, and it takes a certain type of person to balance the ever increasing demands of a modern organization with directing and supporting a diverse group of men and women.

There are faults on both sides, Axelrod adds. "When you become a manager you assume responsibility for the well-being of the people you manage. Many bosses don't fully appreciate that. On the other hand, employees tend to forget that being a good boss is not always about making you feel good: it's about helping you succeed. And that's a very different thing."

Sidebar: Showdown

So, you've had it with your boss and you're bursting for a show down. Here are some tips from our conflict-resolution experts that will help you stay cool and emerge from the experience relatively unscathed.

Look inward. How is your attitude and performance? (Have you become hypersensitive? Do you tend to be negative? Do you work around the boss in front of your colleagues? Ask your co-workers for feedback, be ready to accept your role and buff up your weak areas.)

Check reality: Find out if others share your perceptions of the boss. If so, ask for their support. Be careful though - never badmouth the boss to your colleagues.

Get clarity: Before asking for a meeting, collect your thoughts. Describe his actions. (Is he being abusive, making unreasonable demands, watching over your shoulder or undermining you in front of others?)

Consider the context. (Was it in front of the team yesterday, in a client meeting last week, or at the Christmas party?)

Identify the effect of his behaviour. (How does it make you feel? Does it impact your productivity or create problems elsewhere in the office?)
Be clear on what you want to change and what you see as your bottom line.

Protect yourself. In the meantime, just to be safe, start documenting your interactions – what happened, when and where and who was present. Take steps to secure your privacy and your property. (Keep personal records at home.)

Stay credible. Remain professional in the face of unprofessional behaviour. Your boss wins when others see you being disrespectful – even if he's been pushing your buttons for months. Always do your best and keep a list of your achievements.

Create Options. Before going on the offensive, consider seeking another job or accumulating a financial cushion. Knowing you can quit is very empowering, especially since there's no guarantee that your boss

will change.

Negotiate firmly and respectfully. When you meet, reassure your boss that you want to make things better for both of you. Describe his behaviour and its impact, and ask him why he acts that way. Look for common concerns and goals. Then, consider possible solutions.

Stay cool. Don't give in to bullying by being aggressive or submissive. If your boss gets angry, and you stay calm but resolved, you'll have control. Know what you will and won't accept – and ask for it.

Move up. If your boss is unreceptive, tell him you plan to appeal to his superior and/or human resources – and do it. This should be a last resort as leapfrogging generally ramps up conflict. Make sure that you have a solid case: bad bosses often present well to their own managers. Don't just go to the top with vague complaints; give specific examples. Describe what you've already tried to do and why you need their help.

Stay healthy: No matter what happens, stay physically and mentally healthy. Get plenty of rest and exercise. Avoid participating in the negativity by gossiping and increasing the tension with frustrated coworkers. Use your in-house support network and look to family and friends for moral support. If you feel unduly stressed, seek counseling. If you leave work because of 'stress,' or are laid off, you might be eligible for EI-- if your claim is accompanied by medical proof that your job 'made you sick.'

Sidebar: Test your BBQ (bad boss quotient)

Every bad boss believes he does a great job. So even if you think you're a dynamic, productive leader, it's worth taking this one-minute BBQ test.

A bad boss:

- berates employees in public
- takes credit for employee achievements
- encourages people to fear him
- is a 'no-excuses allowed' manager
- expects employees to know what to do without being told
- yells or shouts at employees
- belittles or humiliates people as punishment
- makes life difficult for those who displease him
- plays favorites
- discourages input and creativity
- constantly checks everyone's work for quality
- is reluctant to let employees make decisions
- expects complete, unquestioning obedience

A good boss:

- listens
- corrects employees privately
- gives people full credit for what they do
- projects a caring image
- defines job duties and deadlines
- speaks to employees with respect
- provides feedback and training
- has clearly defined sanctions for misconduct
- treats all employees fairly and equally
- supervises without being oppressive or suspicious
- encourages initiative and decision-making
- expects employees to question decisions and discuss job issues
- creates an internal conflict resolution mechanism

If you lean more to the dark side, consider yourself at risk, both at work and in your personal relationships. Your employees probably have little respect for you and unless you own the business, your organization may one day be forced to cut you loose. Luckily, experts say it's never too late to invest in a little executive coaching to help change your style and improve your leadership skills. Your

staff will thank you for it.

(Source: National Federation of Independent Business.)

(.....ends)

Take care,

Stephen and Karen

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No Bully For Me

On the web:

<http://www.nobullyforme.ca>

or

<http://www.nobullyforme.org>

Email: nobullyforme@gmail.com

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Karen and Stephen