

## HOW TO DEAL WITH A BULLY AT WORK

Think you work with a bully? Do you regularly feel intimidated, dread to work near a particular coworker, or you're yelled at, insulted, and put down? Does a coworker talk over you at meetings, criticize you, or steal credit for your work? If you answer yes to these questions, chances are good that you're one of 54 million Americans who have been attacked by a bully at work.

You know you're working with a bully when the bully picks out your mistakes and constantly brings them up.

Or worse, the bully gossips about you, tells lies to your coworkers, and even sabotages your work. If you dread going to work, you may have a bully coworker or boss.

If your employer won't help you, and a recent study says they often won't, these are the actions to take to defeat the bully.



### **YOU'RE NOT ALONE: A BULLY LIVES IN MANY WORKPLACES**

The Zogby study, in conjunction with the Workplace Bullying and Trauma Institute (WBTI), found in 2010 that:

- 50% of Americans have not experienced or witnessed bullying, but 35% have been bullied; 15% have witnessed bullying.
- Bosses comprise 72% of bullies.
- More men (62%) are bullies and women are the most frequent targets of bullies (58%). Women bullies target other women (80%).
- Up to 81% of employers are perceived as doing nothing and resisting taking action when targets of bullying fill out a survey. In the general public, only 44.8% perceive the employers as doing nothing.
- 45% of people targeted by a bully experience stress-related health problems including debilitating anxiety, panic attacks, and clinical depression (39%).

### **HOW TO DEAL WITH A BULLY**

You can deal with a bully and change the bully's behavior if you are willing to practice personal courage. But, you must do something.

The bully will not go away; if you make yourself an easy target, you will only encourage the bully. Here's how to deal with your office bully.

## 1. Set Limits on What You Will Tolerate From a Bully

Most importantly, once you have set the limit in your mind, exercise your right to tell the bully to stop the behavior. You might want to rehearse these steps with a friend so that you are more comfortable responding when the bully attacks.

- Describe the behavior you see the bully exhibiting – don't editorialize or offer opinions, just describe what you see. (You regularly enter my cubicle, lean over my shoulder, and read my personal correspondence on my computer screen.)
- Tell the bully exactly how his behavior is impacting your work. (Because much of my work is confidential, these actions make me feel as if I need to hide what I am working on from you, or change screens which is a waste of my time.)
- Tell the bully what behavior you will not put up with in the future. (In the future, you are not to enter my cubicle unless I invite you to come in. This is my private work space and your actions are unwelcome.)
- Stick with your statement and if the bully violates your space, move on to confrontation.

## 2. Confront the Bully With His Own Behavior

Confronting a bully is scary and hard. But, as Jonathan Littman and Marc Hershon suggest in *I Hate People*, bullies are "only effective when they're on solid ground. Ground that you can take away." They suggest that, "Next time he swears or heaves a phone book, call it out. Point out that he's swearing or yelling, and leave the room. Or end the call."

"Remember: You're the adult dealing with a tantrum. No wise parent gives in to a child's fit because it just leads to more fits.

"You're wrapping Bulldozer's fury with tough love. By making statements about his conduct, you're putting him on notice. Keep up your game and by the second or third attempt, Bulldozer will tire of spinning his treads in the sand."

This confrontational approach works in meetings, too. If the bully is talking over you with complaints and criticisms, ask him a direct question about what he recommends instead. If that doesn't work ask him to leave the meeting until you finish your discussion. If he refuses, end the meeting and reschedule the meeting without him.

You need to call out the bully on your terms.

## 3. Document the Bully's Actions

Any time you are feeling bullied or experiencing bullying behavior, document the date, time and details of the incident. Note if another employee witnessed the incident. If you eventually seek help from Human Resources, documentation, especially documentation of the bully's impact on business results and success, gives HR information to work with on your behalf. The bully is not just hurting your feelings; the bully is sabotaging business success.

If the bullying occurs in email or correspondence, maintain a hard copy of the trail of emails and file them in a folder in your computer.

## 4. Your Coworkers Are Targets of the Bully, Too

Note whether the bully pulls the same behavior with your coworkers. Ask your coworkers to document the bully's behavior and any scenes they witness when the bully targets any coworker. If five of you experience the bullying, and five of you document, then you build a case to which HR and your management can respond on solid ground. They need evidence and witnesses, even if everyone knows, that the bully is a bully.

Also, if you decide to press charges in the future, you need witnesses and documentation. The Zogby-WBTI study indicates that only 3% of bullied employees sue and 4% complain to state or federal agencies. So, it's best to confront the behavior, but don't rule out the possibility of a suit, especially if your employment is terminated or threatened by the bully.

## 5. Tell Management and HR About the Bully

You've tried to implement these recommendations, but they aren't working to stop the bully. It's time to get help. Go to HR or your manager with your evidence, especially the evidence that demonstrates the impact of the bully on the business, and file a formal complaint. Most employee handbooks describe the HR investigation process that your complaint sets in motion.

Hope for the best resolution but be prepared to explore other options so you have less contact with the bully. You may even need to find a new job. You may never know what HR did about the bully; you can assess the impact by how he now treats you.

You can address the behavior of a bully in your workplace. With persistence and personal courage, you can neutralize the bully behavior and regain your conflict-free workplace.

source: [www.thebalance.com/](http://www.thebalance.com/) | By Susan M. Heathfield | Updated August 16, 2016

# LISTENING TIPS FOR DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

*During your workday, you are going to encounter boring and uninteresting meetings or lectures which require attention that may be hard for you to give. We've all sat through a lengthy presentation in which it was hard to stay alert or a meeting that just seemed to go on and on without accomplishing anything. In these situations, it's key that you stay engaged. Use the tips and techniques below to help you stay focused so you can better listen and take in what's going on.*



## Listening During Boring Meetings

- In a boring meeting, try taking notes. By incorporating an activity into your listening, you can focus your attention.
- Mentally list or relate the points being made. How do they affect you? What do you know about them?
- Ask questions and stay engaged with the speaker.

## Staying Alert During Lectures

- Sit near the front of the room and try to have a clear view of the speaker. Avoid sitting next to noisy people, and try to be as close to the speaker as possible.
- Do research about the lecturing topic beforehand. Bring notes or take notes while the speaker is talking. However, don't let taking notes distract you - write down only what's important.
- Give eye contact and attention to the speaker.

## Staying Focused in an Interview

- If you are unclear about what the person has said, try repeating what he or she has just told you. This will tell you if you heard the person correctly.
- Try to have a normal conversation, rather than one person asking and the other answering.
- Give eye contact and appropriate body language.

## Handling Problems Through Effective Communication

- When a person approaches you with a problem, listen to what he or she tells you, and then rephrase the problem. This way, the person can correct you if needed, and you can also help him or her visualize a solution.
- Get to know your colleagues and how you or other colleagues can best help them.
- Don't sit behind your desk when someone comes to you for advice. Sit next to or across from the person with nothing in between.
- Try not to be judgmental. Be understanding, and truly listen to what the person is saying. Don't get caught up in mental or emotional filters; try your best to be an effective listener.
- Notice the body language of yourself and adjust it if necessary. Notice the body language of the other person; it'll give you insight into what he or she is really trying to say.
- After you and the person finish talking about the problem, summarize what's been said and agree on steps to move forward.

## Listening to Your Boss

- Don't let attitudes interfere with listening. Drop judgments and sharp criticisms when speaking with him or her.
- Avoid mental and emotional filters when you talk to your boss. Talk and listen with a nonjudgmental attitude.
- Be aware of body language and tone.
- Listen with empathy and understanding.

*Written by Life Advantages - Author Delvina Miremedi ©2016*

## STRENGTHEN YOUR FAMILY BOND

*When we don't spend time with our family, we fail to nurture the relationships that matter most. Even though work and busy schedules may try to get in the way, it's important that you make building better relationships a priority in your household.*



### Ways to Spend More Time Together

When a busy day bogs you down, it's easy to forget to spend time with those who are most important.

However, by initiating simple routines at home, you can make sure that you take substantial time each day to connect with your loved ones:

- Dedicate the first fifteen minutes after you arrive home from work to check in with your children. Share one good thing and one bad thing that happened during your day, and support each other when needed.
- Make notes on a family calendar about when you will spend private time with each child. "Date night" with mom or dad can become the highlight of the child's week.
- Dedicate an hour after dinner or after your children go to sleep to spend time alone with your spouse.

### Connect During Family Meetings

It isn't healthy for any family to hold in aggravations or irritations. Instead, make time for a family meeting each week to talk about what's going on within a family. This would be a great time for children to talk about the way they feel about doing a particular chore, or for parents to share the way they feel about their load of housework. Invite both children and your partner to talk about their feelings openly.

### Schedule Family Outings and Trips

Sharing activities are a great way for the family to experience time with one another. Plan enjoyable events like going to a park, museum, camping, or a kayaking trip. If your child participates in extracurricular activities, this can also become a great time for everyone in the family to spend time together watching and supporting them. Afterwards, the whole family can go out to eat or grab ice cream to share stories about the event.

### Handle an Argument in a Positive Way

If an argument flares up, use the time constructively. Stick to the issue at hand without bringing up past problems. Work on finding a solution to the problem. Instead of bickering over little annoyances, try to give a little and compromise to help the family move forward.

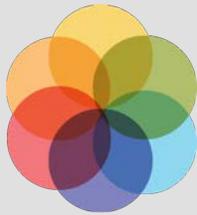
### Listen to Differing Perspectives

Listen openly and sincerely to the other person's perspective and then talk about your feelings on the same issues. Tell the other person that you value his or her feelings and want to understand his or her perspective. This will encourage the other person to do the same for you, and help you find a compromise that benefits everyone.

### Accept Feelings and Work Toward Solutions

No matter how trivial an issue seems, value the other person's feelings and opinion of it. Listen to feelings and hurts, and then find ways to work through conflict and find solutions. Agree on solutions, and then implement changes.

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