

## How to Detect & Protect Against Workplace Bullying -- a Chronic Corporate Disease

Written by Ginny Grimsley  
Monday, 08 October 2012 15:29

---

By: Rakesh Malhotra

Stories of workplace bullying are commonplace throughout the United States.

Some real-life examples:

Mavis: "When I started there, I was told that someone had been acting in the position and had expected to get the job. This person continually undermined me and turned other staff against me. I endured 12 months of hell, and felt as if I was sinking in quicksand."

A male employee at a different company: "The misery took over my whole life. I turned nasty and bitter and treated my wife and kids like whipping posts. After many visits to a psychologist, I was able to think of all the positive things in my life. Now I look back and think I wouldn't want to go through that experience again."

In general, there are no legal repercussions for non-physical bullying except in specific cases, such as sexual harassment. In fact, bullying is a character trait that tends to be condoned in American society. Consider our national obsession -- football. The object of this celebrated game is to get the ball to the other player's goal, no matter what it takes: trampling, hitting, pushing, screaming. If football is a metaphor for American society, then the winner is the person who pushes others out of the way and wins no matter the cost.

Bullies win by controlling situations and people around them. They crave power and the attention that comes from getting what they want.

The effects of working with a bully

Adults have a difficult time performing their jobs effectively when subjected to bullying by a co-worker. It takes a toll physically because of our physiological responses to emotional stress. Typically, victims endure feelings of depression, guilt and shame, and they suffer sleep loss and fatigue. In some cases, victims begin to believe the bully's behavior is warranted, and they develop feelings of worthlessness. They cannot complete tasks at the same level as others in

## How to Detect & Protect Against Workplace Bullying -- a Chronic Corporate Disease

Written by Ginny Grimsley

Monday, 08 October 2012 15:29

---

their units.

Victims of bullying may suffer from panic disorders, post traumatic stress syndrome, agoraphobia and stress-induced high blood pressure. If they leave the job or are docked because of resulting lowered performance, they face economic issues. Some take their own lives.

The abuse takes a toll on victims in every way imaginable.

Are you a bully?

Being accused of being the bully can be difficult to accept. You may believe your actions were unintentional, or a justified emotional response to provocation. Perhaps, you see yourself as the only one in the office qualified to do anything right. However, whatever you have said or done, whether purposefully or not, you have created a culture of negativity for at least one person and you need to honestly assess the situation and your role in it.

Symptoms that you may be the bully include:

- Insulting a coworker (remember, one person's "joke" may be another's insult).
- Undermining another employee's work by creating a hostile environment or perhaps by consistently calling their attention to "flaws". (Bullies focus on a person, while constructive criticism focuses on a task.)
- As an employer, ignoring your employees' suggestions.
- Humiliating your employee in front of others.

## How to Detect & Protect Against Workplace Bullying -- a Chronic Corporate Disease

Written by Ginny Grimsley

Monday, 08 October 2012 15:29

---

If any of these sound like something that you may be doing, it is important to address this immediately with your victim. You may want to speak with your doctor about getting help, such as counseling, sensitivity training, anger management and other seminars.

It is important to understand the signs and symptoms of a bully in order to help the victim and the victimizer deal with and exterminate the behavior.

If you are a victim, diligently record workplace bullying events. If you choose to make a formal complaint, you will be responsible for providing information should there be charges brought against the bully.

### About Rakesh Malhotra

Rakesh Malhotra, founder of Five Global Values ( [www.FiveGlobalValues.com](http://www.FiveGlobalValues.com) ), is a world-traveled, values-driven business leader who specializes in organization behavior. Rakesh's fascination with the connection between human behavior and core values was sparked many years ago. As a result of working, living, and traveling around the world to nearly 40 countries, Rakesh realized that the Five Global Values determine overall human behavior across all cultures. He is also the author of *Adventures of Tornado Kid: Whirling Back Home Towards Timeless Values*.