

The Bully Boss

By Barrington H. Brennen, February 16, 2012

There is a serious bullying problem in our schools and communities among pre-teens and teenagers. So many children are afraid to go to school. Too many of our parents and teachers do not have the skills to respond to this challenge. However, there are also adult bullies. They often go unnoticed or get away with their bullying behaviors. The adult bully that's really reaping havoc in our society is the bully boss. This bully is the lion that roars his or her way to success wounding people on their way up. According to Wikipedia online dictionary "bullying is a form of aggressive behavior manifested by the use of force or coercion to affect others, particularly when the behavior is habitual and involves an imbalance of power."

Some bully bosses are hard to recognize because they appear to be nice, cool, are in control of their lives. Their colleagues on the job join them in forming a power-pack that makes it difficult for their subordinates and other to penetrate. It is amazing how the bully works on the job. Whether it is the bully president, supervisor, manager, teacher, pastor, or coordinator, they are best described as "serial bullies". Tim Field, a specialist who studies bullying behavior said, "Most organizations have a serial bully. It never ceases to amaze me how one person's divisive, disordered, dysfunctional behavior can permeate the entire organization like a cancer." One author said that "the serial bully appears to lack insight into his or her behavior and seems to be oblivious to the crassness and inappropriateness."

How can you identify a serial bully? Below is a list prepared by Robert D. Hare, a world-leading authority on psychopathic behavior and author of The Hare PCL-R Psychopathy Checklist. A serial bully

- is a convincing, practiced liar and when called to account, will make up anything spontaneously to fit their needs at that moment.
- has a Jekyll and Hyde nature - is vile, vicious and vindictive in private, but innocent and charming in front of witnesses; no-one can (or wants to) believe this individual has a vindictive nature - only the current target of the serial bully's aggression sees both sides; whilst the Jekyll side is described as "charming" and convincing enough to deceive personnel, management and a tribunal, the Hyde side is frequently described as "evil"; Hyde is the real person, Jekyll is an act
- excels at deception and should never be underestimated in their capacity to deceive
- uses excessive charm and is always plausible and convincing when peers, superiors or others are present (charm can be used to deceive as well as to cover for lack of empathy)
- is possessed of an exceptional verbal facility and will out maneuver most people in verbal interaction, especially at times of conflict
- is often described as smooth, slippery, slimy, ingratiating, fawning, toadying, obsequious, sycophantic
- relies on mimicry, repetition and regurgitation to convince others that he or she is both a "normal" human being and a tough dynamic manager, as in extolling the virtues of the latest management fads and pouring forth the accompanying jargon

- is unusually skilled in being able to anticipate what people want to hear and then saying it plausibly
- cannot be trusted or relied upon
- is emotionally retarded with an arrested level of emotional development; whilst language and intellect may appear to be that of an adult, the bully displays the emotional age of a five-year-old
- is emotionally immature and emotionally untrustworthy
- exhibits unusual and inappropriate attitudes to sexual matters, sexual behavior and bodily functions; underneath the charming exterior there are often suspicions or hints of sex discrimination and sexual harassment, perhaps also sexual dysfunction, sexual inadequacy, sexual perversion, sexual violence or sexual abuse
- in a relationship, is incapable of initiating or sustaining intimacy
- holds deep prejudices (e.g. against the opposite gender, people of a different sexual orientation, other cultures and religious beliefs, foreigners, etc - prejudiced people are unvaryingly unimaginative) but goes to great lengths to keep this prejudicial aspect of their personality secret
- is self-opinionated and displays arrogance, audacity, a superior sense of entitlement and sense of invulnerability and untouchability
- is a control freak and has a compulsive need to control everyone and everything you say, do, think and believe; for example, will launch an immediate personal attack attempting to restrict what you are permitted to say if you start talking knowledgeably about psychopathic personality or antisocial personality disorder in their presence - but aggressively maintains the right to talk (usually unknowledgeably) about anything they choose; serial bullies despise anyone who enables others to see through their deception and their mask of sanity
- displays a compulsive need to criticize whilst simultaneously refusing to value, praise and acknowledge others, their achievements, or their existence
- flits from topic to topic so that you come away feeling you've never had a proper conversation
- refuses to be specific and never gives a straight answer
- undermines and destroys anyone who the bully perceives to be an adversary, a potential threat, or who can see through the bully's mask
- is adept at creating conflict between those who would otherwise collate incriminating information about them
- may pursue a vindictive vendetta against anyone who dares to hold them accountable, perhaps using others' resources and contemptuous of the damage caused to other people and organizations in pursuance of the vendetta
- is also quick to belittle, undermine, denigrate and discredit anyone who calls, attempts to call, or might call the bully to account
- gains gratification from denying people what they are entitled to
- is highly manipulative, especially of people's perceptions and emotions (eg guilt)
- when called upon to share or address the needs and concerns of others, responds with impatience, irritability and aggression

- is arrogant, haughty, high-handed, and a know-all
- often has an overwhelming, unhealthy and narcissistic attention-seeking need to portray themselves as a wonderful, kind, caring and compassionate person, in contrast to their behavior and treatment of others; the bully sees nothing wrong with their behavior and chooses to remain oblivious to the discrepancy between how they like to be seen and how they are seen by others
- is spiritually dead although may loudly profess some religious belief or affiliation
- is mean-spirited, officious, and often unbelievably petty
- is greedy, selfish, a parasite and an emotional vampire
- is always a taker and never a giver
- is convinced of their superiority and has an overbearing belief in their qualities of leadership but cannot distinguish between leadership (maturity, decisiveness, assertiveness, co-operation, trust, integrity) and bullying (immaturity, impulsiveness, aggression, manipulation, distrust, deceitfulness)
- often fraudulently claims qualifications, experience, titles, entitlements or affiliations which are ambiguous, misleading, or bogus
- is constantly imposing on others a false reality made up of distortion and fabrication

I am sure you were able to identify someone as a bully as you read this list. However, if you realized that you are a serial bully I encourage you to seek professional help.

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