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Timely Information for Personal Success

Protecting Against Workplace Bullying

By Rakesh Malhotra

Stories of workplace bullying are commonplace throughout the United States. In general, there are no legal repercussions for non-physical bullying except in specific cases, such as sexual harassment. Bullies win by controlling situations and people around them. They crave power and the attention that comes from getting what they want.

Effects of Working with a Bully

Adults have a hard time performing their jobs effectively when subjected to bullying. It takes a toll because of our physiological responses to emotional stress. Typically, victims endure feelings of depression, guilt and shame, and they may 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 their departments.

Victims of bullying may suffer from panic disorders, post-traumatic stress syndrome, and stress-induced high blood pressure. If they quit or are docked pay because of lowered job performance, they face economic issues. Some may even take their own lives. The abuse takes a toll on victims in every way imaginable.

Are YOU a Bully?

Being accused of being a bully can be difficult to accept. You may believe your actions were unintentional, or a justified emotional response to provocation. But whatever you have said or done; and 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 a bully include:

- **Insulting a co-worker** (remember, one person's "joke" may be another's insult).
- **Undermining another employee's work by continually calling attention to the person's "flaws."** (Bullies focus on a *person*, while constructive criticism focuses on a **task**.)
- **If you're an employer, ignoring employees' suggestions**.
- **Humiliating the employee in front of others**.

If any of these sound like something that you may be doing, it is important to address this matter immediately with the 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. ❖

Rakesh Malhotra is the founder of Five Global Values (www.FiveGlobalValues.com).

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Healthy Recipe: Banana Pudding Pops

INGREDIENTS:

- ½ cup light brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 2 cups low-fat milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 cups diced bananas (about 2 large)
- Pinch of salt

NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

- Calories per serving: 82
- Carbohydrates: 18 g.
- Protein: 2 g.
- Sodium: 41 mg.
- Fat: 1 g. (0 g. saturated)
- Fiber: 1 g.
- Potassium: 112 mg.

DIRECTIONS:

❶ Whisk sugar, cornstarch and salt in large saucepan. Add milk and whisk until combined. Bring to boil over medium heat, whisking occasionally. Boil, whisking constantly for 1 minute. Remove from heat and stir in vanilla.

❷ Put about half the pudding in food processor or blender and add bananas. Process until smooth. (Use caution when pureeing hot liquids.) Stir mixture back into the remaining pudding.

❸ Divide mixture among freezer-pop molds. Insert pop sticks and freeze until completely firm, about 6 hours. Dip molds briefly in hot water before unmolding.

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Questions and Answers

Work Environments Matter

Q: *Why do you hear so much today about work environments? Why should that make a difference in an employee's performance? Don't all workers have to be adaptable today?*

A: It's true that employees in today's ever-changing workplaces have to be prepared to learn new tasks all the time and otherwise "adapt" to the workplace. However, there's a lot more to a work environment than meets the eye. For one thing, some people are much more adaptable than others: they could work in a noisy environment, a quiet workplace, around nice co-workers, crabby colleagues, it wouldn't matter – they'd work well regardless of the setting, and they'd succeed on the job.

However, everyone isn't so fortunate. Let's say that "Paul" loved working outdoors as an electrical lineman. Then, he was promoted to a desk job within the utility company, and he found he hated it. While working indoors is a great environment for some, it was a poor fit for Paul.

Work environments can have a LOT to do with whether an employee succeeds (and is happy) on the job. ❖

Survey Discusses Cancer Misdiagnosis

The National Coalition on Health Care (NCHC) and Best Doctors, Inc. recently released results of a major joint survey investigating diagnostic accuracy in cancer. The survey of 400 leading cancer specialists was audited and certified by Gallup.®

Physicians' responses indicated a perception that misdiagnoses occur *less often* than published would indicate. When asked how often they estimate misdiagnosis or incomplete characterizations occur in oncology, 60% of respondents estimated this only occurs zero to 10% of the time. However, published studies indicate significantly **higher** rates of misdiagnoses overall, from 15-28% of cases (according to the *American Journal of Medicine* and *BMJ Quality & Safety*, respectively).

Does misdiagnosis mean physicians don't care or aren't committed? "Of course not," noted David Seligman, chairman and CEO of Best Doctors. "But doctors today are increasingly time-strapped. Many of them are seeing up to 30 patients a day. They're working in an overburdened health system with fractured or incomplete medical records. All of these things too often directly impact health outcomes – no matter how dedicated or skilled the physician may be."

Indeed: a large portion of participants (38%) named "fragmented or missing information" when asked what they viewed as the most significant barrier to accurately diagnosing cancer.

"Lawmakers and health care stakeholders have an opening to take firm steps to begin formally measuring and addressing misdiagnosis," said Evan Falchuk, vice chairman of Best Doctors.

For the complete survey, visit www.bestdoctors.com/NCHC_BD_survey. ❖