

Reducing Conflict 14 Shrinking Bullies

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD



specific.

Shrinking bullies in the workplace is an interesting study because it is not that hard to accomplish. We need to consider why the bully takes such an aggressive approach to interpersonal relationships.

We normally think of bullying as predominately a male trait, but I believe the problem is gender-neutral although some of the mannerisms may be gender-

There can be a number of different mechanisms involved in the decision to come on too strong with other people. I will cover a few of the most common reasons for bullying in this brief article.

Please note, this article is about how a peer can deal with a bully. It is not intended to cover how the supervisor of a bully should respond. That topic was covered in the article entitled [Successful Supervisor 28 Dealing with Bullies](#).

Insecurity

Many bullies compensate for their own insecurity by blustering in the face of other people. It is a way for them to feel on top of the situation when deep down they have doubts about their own power or abilities. As they bluster and become bellicose, it causes a reaction in other people that actually encourages them to continue doing it.

Back to the Playground

In a large portion of cases, the bullies act aggressively because, years ago, on the playground at school, they found out that it works. If they make themselves loud enough and bluster big enough, other people will back off, and they get their way.

In that description of why bullies do their thing lies the seeds of how to get them to stop bullying you. If you remain calm and refuse to let the bully push you around, then he or she will eventually stop bothering you. It may not work in 100% of the cases, but if you refuse to get rattled, you are actually beating the bullies at their own game.

Say something like, "I am not going to accept that kind of language and aggression from you. All you are doing here is embarrassing yourself." If you stand up to the bully in this way, sooner or later he or she will take the aggression out on another person and leave you alone.

Summary

Letting bullies know that you are on to their game makes it difficult for them to be successful at intimidating you. It may not work all the time, but it is the best defense I have found.

Free Video

Here is a 3-minute video that contains more information on how to deal with a bully.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bq1YOuXkP64>

Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD, is a consultant, trainer, speaker, and author in the areas of leadership and trust. He is the author of four books: 1. The Trust Factor: Advanced Leadership for Professionals (2003), 2. Understanding E-Body Language: Building Trust Online (2006), 3. Leading with Trust is Like Sailing Downwind (2009), and 4. Trust in Transition: Navigating Organizational Change (2014). In addition, he has authored over 1000 articles and videos on various topics in leadership and trust. Bob has many years as a senior executive with a Fortune 500 Company and with non-profit organizations.