The Bully-Proof Workplace

Essential Strategies, Tips, and Scripts for Dealing with the Office Sociopath

Peter J. Dean
MS, PhD

Molly D. Shepard
MS, MSM
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Peter J. Dean and Molly D. Shephard

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Bullying: A Workplace Crisis

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.

—Desmond Tutu

Sixty-five million workers in the United States are affected by workplace bullying each year. The numbers are staggering—and on the rise—both in the U.S. and globally. A study\(^1\) by Charlotte Rayner and her colleagues at the Manchester School of Management found that one in four people are bullied at work. Perhaps not surprisingly, women are more often the targets than men. In her book, *The Need to Say No*, Jill Brooke\(^2\) reports that one-third more women than men are bullied. Roughly one in four American workers say they’ve dealt with bullying at some point, according to a 2014 survey by the Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI).\(^3\) And a study conducted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)\(^4\) found that 25 percent of companies that participated reported some degree of bullying in the preceding year. The 2014 WBI survey\(^5\) indicated that 72 percent of American workers are aware that workplace bullying happens, 21 percent have witnessed it, and 27 percent have suffered from abusive
bullying at work. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)\(^6\) found 56 percent of U.S. employers do not have workplace bullying policies, although 35 percent of the U.S. workforce has reported being bullied at work.

These statistics may surprise many, especially those who believe that bullying is a schoolyard phenomenon that we simply outgrow. We believe, however, that where bullying is concerned, there is a strong connection between schools and the workplace. Bullying behaviors exhibited by youths in schools eventually become habitual and move into the workplace. Bullying learned at work is showcased at home to children and thus makes its way back into schools. It is a vicious cycle. Lower school teachers knows that bullying exemplified in children’s behavior at school is often a reflection of what their parents bring home from their work.

The reality is that in the workplace, bullying takes on numerous different forms: although 56 percent of workplace bullying is top down, i.e., a manager bullies a subordinate, more than 33 percent of bullying is between coworkers and 11 percent is bottom up. All too often the result of this repeated behavior leads to the target leaving the company—whether because, like Jonathan Martin, they can no longer put up with the abuse or because their performance suffers and they are let go. Yet corporate employers are still in denial about bullying. According to the WBI\(^7\) (2014), more than 56 percent of employers either deny it exists, discount its effects, or rationalize the behavior. The loss of talent alone can take an enormous financial toll on an organization because replacing a performer can cost two to three times that person’s salary. More difficult to measure are the physical and mental health impairments caused by stress, as well as the social harm done within the organization when people have difficulty
building meaningful and trusting relationships. What thrives in a workplace where bullying is tolerated is depression, anxiety, customer complaints, and litigation. The quality of work, productivity, employee loyalty, and engagement disappear, and if the bullying is left unchecked, the bottom line of the organization is hurt. In our executive coaching practice, we have also seen that bullies sometimes select targets because of their proclivity to suggest ideas outside the normal boundaries of group-think—i.e., suggestions that may rock the boat or go against the opinion(s) of the boss—which results in the loss of creativity and innovative thinking when the target is bullied. In this chapter, we will define bullying, its impact in the workplace, and its cost to businesses.

Andrea Adams was one of the first researchers to use the term “workplace bullying” in her book, *Bullying at Work*, which is based on her study of the mistreatment of bank employees. Her research showed that workplace bullying behavior includes a wide range of overt and covert behaviors of intimidation. The office sociopath is insensitive to others, lacks a social conscience, and is only interested in his personal needs and desires without concern about their behavior to others. They seldom feel guilt and do not think there is anything wrong when they bully others. They see everybody else as outside of themselves. They are liars, gossips, hypocrites, controllers, boasters, and act without impulse control.

Indeed, through our own proprietary research and work as executive coaches, we have come to recognize bullying as an observable behavior that features several basic components. First, bullying is intentionally negative, aggressive, and malicious toward someone, who often has talent or expertise, but less power than the bully. Second, it is repeated persistently,
usually in front of others, to wear down the target. Bullying is not an occasional or infrequent expression of frustration—it is meant to harass, coerce, humiliate, demean, dominate, exclude, and/or subjugate another person. It purposely diminishes the target’s ability to work and redirects energy toward being on the defense. Third, the bully often closes down avenues of communication, making it difficult for the target to speak up for himself. Most important, the effect of the bullying doesn’t stop with the target. It influences others in the workplace and can demotivate or instill fear, anxiety, stress, and a sense of powerlessness throughout the culture, which can, in turn, inhibit loyalty, creativity, and positive energy. Some who use bullying tactics do so believing that the culture supports it, or worse, that it is how to get ahead in the company.

Today, most employers tend to deny, discount, or rationalize bullying behavior—in part due to a lack of understanding of the problem and how to deal with it. According to the Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI), some employers even encourage it. Only 16 percent of employers acknowledge it and condemn it, while just 12 percent of employers want to eliminate bullying in their organizations. If CEOs and executives do not acknowledge, condemn, and seek to eliminate bullying, employers give cover to office sociopaths as a result. The following chart, reported in 2014 by WBI, shows employers’ responses to bullying in the workplace.

[INSERT FIGURE 1-1]

We know from experience that bullies and bully bosses stall, rather than speed up, productivity and engagement at work. They also impede the growth and development of talent in the company. On the other hand, creating a zero-tolerance policy for bullying and encouraging managers to use their positive power and influence to increase worker engagement leads
to reenergized levels of productivity. An emotionally connected and interpersonally engaged workforce will be more innovative, creative, and productive—and that means higher profits.

**Bullying Behavior at All Levels**

In all sectors of the workplace, no level of employee or size of organization is immune from bullying. Numerous state governments have recognized this issue as well. In 2013 The Healthy Workplace Bill was introduced by WBI in 24 states in an attempt to bring attention to this national issue and enact laws against workplace bullying. Given an increased emphasis on human resources, emotional and social intelligence, policies that protect workers’ rights, and the many companies that claim their people are their most important asset, it may seem surprising that bullying is so widespread today. The growth of corporate power, the role of management, the stressors in the workplace, and a variety of historical factors have led to the increase of bullying in the workplace. Three outcomes of this increase in workplace bullying, according to the Society for Human Resource Management, are decreased morale (68 percent), increased stress and/or depression levels (48 percent), and decreased trust and integrity among coworkers.

**The Costs of Bullying**

Ironic isn’t it that the very managers who have been focusing on the bottom line to impress their corporate bosses have brought about an increase in bullying behavior that ultimately diminishes the very profits they are trying to increase? In their 2013 *Harvard Business Review* article, Pearson and
Porath\textsuperscript{9} reported the results of a poll of 800 managers and employees in 17 industries that showed the effects of incivility on the job. “Incivility” is not a soft term. It refers to a range of behaviors from minor acts of thoughtlessness and unchecked rudeness to acts of malice, which includes bullying behavior. The consequences for those on the receiving end of the full range of incivility that Porath and Pearson suggest include:

- 48 percent intentionally decreased their work effort;
- 47 percent intentionally decreased the time spent at work;
- 38 percent intentionally decreased the quality of their work;
- 80 percent lost work time worrying about the bullying incident;
- 63 percent lost work time avoiding the bully who offended them;
- 66 percent said that their performance declined;
- 78 percent said that their commitment to the organization declined;
- 12 percent said that they left their job because of the uncivil treatment; and
- 25 percent admitted to taking their frustration out on customers.

In 2011, Accountemps\textsuperscript{10} surveyed 150 executives and 1,000 senior managers from Fortune 1000 companies (the 1,000 largest American companies, ranked according to revenue) and asked them, “What percentage of your time is wasted resolving staff personality conflicts?” These senior leaders said that they spent an average of 18 percent of their time on these issues. That translates into more than seven hours each week spent on resetting employee relationships, mending the consequences of incivility and bullying behavior, and getting work back on track.
Clearly, bullying is detrimental to workplace productivity, but it can also damage the bottom line. The potential dollar cost to American-based companies from bullying, according to Dr. Paul Rosch, president of the American Institute of Stress\(^\text{11}\) (AIS), is $300 billion a year in terms of diminished productivity, employee turnover, and insurance. The Crisis Prevention Institute\(^\text{12}\) reports that, “research has clearly demonstrated that when targets (of bullying) believe someone at work has treated them disrespectfully, half will lose work time worrying about future interactions with the instigator, and half will contemplate changing jobs to avoid a recurrence. Research conducted by Know Bull: Anti-Bullying By Design\(^\text{13}\) showed that, in Australia, the financial costs to business of workplace bullying is estimated at between A$6 and A$13 billion a year, which includes indirect costs such as absenteeism, labor turnover, loss of productivity, and legal expenses. The average claim for stress from bullying is A$41,186 as compared to a physical injury claim of A$23,441.

According to the U.K.-based Chartered Management Institute, every year 100 million days of productivity over the entire U.K. workforce are lost because of absenteeism due to bullying. Whether it is the insidious Belier making snide comments in a meeting that challenge another’s credibility, the sarcastic Blocker who excludes people’s contributions by shutting them down, the attention-seeking Braggart who shows blatant disregard for others’ time by talking too much, or the anger-filled Brute yelling, threatening, and pounding his fist on the table, all bullies generate a negative and toxic work environment that results in increases in hypertension, panic attacks, and depression among employees. Both the targeted worker and other staff members may leave an organization because of a bullying culture, resulting in the loss of talent and intellectual capital, not to mention productivity when new employees need to be brought up to speed. In 2014, WBI\(^\text{8}\) reported that for each worker bullied out of his job
who earned a $50,000 salary, the recruiting and replacement expenses were at least $75,000, not including the potential litigation fees if a bullied employee sues for damages. WBI reports that for every threat of a lawsuit, it costs the company $30,000, and if a case goes to court, it will cost at least $60,000 before it even goes to trial.

The increases in healthcare and legal expenditures and decreased productivity, and the fact that replacing a worker can cost two or three times that person’s salary to develop the same level of talent to replace him or her, adds an enormous financial burden on a company. And if a company is dealing with all of these issues, it is also putting its good name and reputation at risk.

For the bullied person, the costs are more personal, but no less devastating. The workplace becomes like a psychological prison of hesitation, mindless thinking, and negative expectations, which drains energy and reduces overall productivity, making going to work a miserable daily experience. According to Dr. Gary Namie of WBI and the founder of the Campaign Against Workplace Bullying, some become less trusting of their colleagues after being bullied. In addition, he reports that 82 percent of people targeted by a bully leave their workplace—38 percent leave for health reasons and 44 percent after receiving unwarranted negative performance appraisals.

**Bullies at Work Aren’t New**

*I would rather be a little nobody, than to be an evil somebody.*

—*Abraham Lincoln*
Although bullies have existed since the beginning of time, their numbers began increasing in U.S. workplaces when layers of management were introduced at the start of the era of mass production.

Soon after the Civil War, the growth of corporate America as we know it began. As the robber barons—Cornelius Vanderbilt, J. Pierpont Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, and Andrew Carnegie among them—expanded their control over various industries by acquiring more and more companies, their organizations became so large, they were no longer able to oversee them on their own. They began hiring managers to help get the work done, and management was charged with overseeing workers. This period, as Ralph Estes\(^\text{14}\) points out in *Tyranny of the Bottom Line*, saw companies evolve into many divisions, territories, and subsidiaries, making them look more like empires. As owners replaced themselves with non-owning managers, the managers promised greater efficiency and increased profits which they “guaranteed” with their professional credentials. Owners were no longer interested in whether their companies were fulfilling their chartered purpose; instead, they wanted only profits reports. Over time, the profits report (whether to shareholders or a single owner), became the *only* performance report. This sole focus on profits led to accumulation of power in the management ranks, as less and less attention was paid to the relationship between managers and workers, lest it cause a negative impact on profits.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Frederick W. Taylor emerged as an important force in American business. Although his system of scientific management was designed to help managers improve efficiency at work as well as to promote practices that were good for the manager *and* the employee, corporate managers understood it only as a way to get more work out of people. Taylor was striving for ways to continually increase the
efficiency of any task by increasing the output of the worker. Little thought was given to the way in which the system viewed workers as cogs in the wheel whose rights or needs were ignored in favor of the overall efficiency of the company. Managers had the power of sanctions over hourly workers. They were in control, and they were charged with increasing profits. The result: bullying became commonplace as a means to force people to work harder under the threat of loss of employment.

The growth in the power of management led to more workplace bullying, a trend that continues to this day. In recent decades, globalization, technology, and the speed of change have led to an ever more competitive business landscape, which has created the kind of high-pressure work environment that brings about the four types of bullying.

Attempts to Balance the Relationship of Manager and Worker

As early as the start of the twentieth century, there were some who recognized the imbalance of power between manager and worker. Even Taylor,\textsuperscript{15} in his classic, \textit{The Principles of Scientific Management}, suggested ways in which managers and workers could cooperate to solve workplace problems together. In Taylor’s view, both have a stake in cooperating: management controls the playing field by scheduling who does what work by when, while workers control quality, quantity, and costs. Taylor also believed that if workers were demotivated, the blame lay with management, not the employees.

Frank and Lillian Gilbreth, both early adherents of Taylorism, broke from Taylor when it became obvious that Taylor found it unacceptable to consider the workers as people, not mechanical cogs in a wheel. The
Gilbreths wanted managers and workers to team together to produce quality goods quickly and efficiently, but they wanted the process of work to include what was going on in the minds of the people doing the work. They wanted managers to lead their teams using what we now call emotional and social intelligence, while Taylor favored “enforcement” by “efficiency experts” to be the primary tool of management.

During the Depression, the exploitation of workers became common—when work was hard to come by, workers become more tolerant of bullying managers. Steinbeck’s Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, is a brilliant portrait of these desperate times. In reality, though, there were few Tom Joads who would risk losing their jobs by speaking up about the terrible working conditions the rank and file endured.

**Changes in the Work Culture**

During World War II, a huge influx of women and minorities entered the workforce. Women shifted from working at home to lending a hand in heavy industry, filling in for the men who went to war. African-Americans flocked northward in greater numbers in hopes of industry jobs. After the war, women didn’t all leave the workplace, having discovered the benefits of working, while minority workers wanted to maintain the higher wages they’d begun enjoying with factory jobs in the North.

In our research, many white men reported that it seemed as if women and minorities just showed up at work one day. In their minds, the fact that the men were there first was no small distinction. And many felt that every woman or minority kept a man out of the workforce who had already paid his dues—and that women and minorities had cut into the
queue. Some men repressed their feelings of outrage, while others were vocal in their opposition and anger—often resulting in direct or indirect bullying. The 1979 film *Norma Rae*, based on the life of Crystal Lee Sutton, is a vivid example of the kind of bullying and intimidation women and minorities endured in the decades after World War II.

More recently, a move to flatten organizational structures emerged in the 1980s and 1990s as a result of Michael Hammer and James Champy’s theories of reengineering. Organizational charts began to look like deflated triangles with a very wide base. They mostly resulted in matrix-managed organizations that still had many levels, but rather than there being one reporting structure leading up to the CEO, an employee’s boss changed depending on the project to which he was assigned. This meant that employees often reported to several different managers; managers in turn had a variety of teams whose members were sometimes borrowed from another line of reporting for a specific project. With workers seen as moveable parts in a complex matrix, it was easy to have bullying behavior go unnoticed or dismissed if reported. It was easy for a bully to hide in plain sight without drawing scrutiny.

Globalization also created enormous changes in the workplace. The speed of change in business, particularly given the constant advances in technology and the flattening of the organizational structure, resulted in a workplace that was often stressful and intense. As massive layoffs in all kinds of companies became routine, workers at all levels no longer felt secure in their jobs.

In this kind of environment, bullying can flourish. Managers and leaders may use aggressive tactics to retain control. People at every level of an organization may exhibit bullying traits as a way to undermine others
while making themselves feel more secure. And sometimes, bullying behavior turns violent. According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health,\textsuperscript{16} each week in the United States, an average of 33,000 workers are assaulted on the job. And, in a survey done in 2005 by the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics regarding workplace violence prevention, nearly 5 percent of the 7.1 million private industry business establishments questioned had an incident of workplace violence within the 12 months prior to the survey.

Bullying seems to occur more often in a workplace that has highly ranked jobs working alongside those with a lower status, according to the WBI. Healthcare, public service industries, and educational institutions seem to report more incidents of bullying. Organizations with rigid hierarchical structures, with stressful conditions, and with a bureaucratic modality, such as law enforcement, higher education, and nursing, have also seen an uptick. The more an industry feels the stress of inequity and bleak horizons for opportunities, the greater the bullying incidents.

Today workplace bullying is on the rise. A recent study conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)\textsuperscript{17} revealed that 51 percent of organizations hear about bullying incidents, citing mostly verbal abuse, malicious gossiping, and spreading lies and rumors; and 50 percent hear about bullying as the use of threats and intimidation. In their book, \textit{The Cost of Bad Behavior: How Incivility Is Damaging Your Business and What to Do About It}, management professors Christine Pearson and Christine Porath\textsuperscript{18} provide much evidence that bullying and incivility are more manifest now due to increases in cyberbullying. The new 24/7 workplace, enabled by technology and round-the-clock communication have made it easier for bullies to survive and proliferate.
**Four Types of Workplace Bully**

As executive coaches, we listen daily to our clients’ stories of bullying that they either have witnessed or suffered in the workplace—in the public sector as well as in the private sector, in the financial industry, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, technology, telecommunications, entertainment, law, government, nonprofits, etc.

Bullies are pervasive. They demean, diminish, defame, belittle, lie, spread rumors, act selfishly, and target a person repeatedly. Bullies have great difficulty listening, empathizing, attending, and showing respect to others in interpersonal exchanges. They usually have their own selfish agenda in mind and not the agenda of the business or company at which they work. They feel no remorse if their actions, such as consistently badgering subordinates, spreading false gossip, outright lying, blocking colleague from getting credit for work, or crushing someone in a conversation, cause emotional harm. The manifestation of bullying behavior is enhanced greatly when someone is in a position of power over others. In his October 2016 *Harvard Business Review* article entitled “Managing Yourself: Don’t Let Power Corrupt You,” University of California, Berkeley professor Dacher Keltner presented his study finding that people in positions of power are three times more likely to abuse that power by yelling, saying insulting things at the office, and exhibiting rash, rude, and unethical actions. The power differential lends itself to abuse. Drs. Ruth and Gary Namie report that 81 percent of workplace bullies are bosses/managers. Without a policy of accountability for fair and respectful treatment of women and men at work, the workplace can be a potentially slippery slope where managers, plagued with insecurity and a lack of skills in civility, may fall into interpersonal bullying behavior.
We have found bullies in the workplace to fall into four common types: the Brute, who uses aggressive, antisocial, and even threatening behavior to keep others in line; the Braggart, self-adoring narcissists who focus attention on themselves; the Blocker, who denigrates and always finds fault with the ideas of others; and the Belier, who besmirches others behind their backs with false statements, rumors, deceptions, and innuendoes. In developing this schema of four types of bullies, we drew on our seasoned executive coaching experience, our own research, and our knowledge of psychology.

**The Belier**

The Belier slanders and deceives others by lies, gossip, and rumors. Beliers misrepresent the truth behind the back of a target. They dismiss or belittle a target’s contributions with false, vague, and general comments to others behind the scenes. The comments are designed to discredit the work of the target and to taint the target as incompetent and unworthy of praise. These falsehoods usually stem from the Belier’s own insecurity and lack of confidence but can also be motivated by reckless ambition, mood swings, territorialism, and resistance to change.

**The Blocker**

Blockers, who bully compulsively, seek to have total control over task functions at work. The Blocker creates rigid unwritten rules for others to follow and if they don’t follow them, the Blocker will discourage, dissuade, and deny others the ability to contribute their ideas. Blockers mistakenly strive for perfection by obsessive control over the task to the exclusion of others’ impact by blocking them from participation. Their mode of
operation at work is always basically the same, a serious focus on task by placing a premium on control of their emotions and repelling other people’s emotions. They insist that others follow a robotic method of operation in the completion of tasks without sharing how they think or feel about the work. Only the Blocker will decide what is right. The consequence of this way of doing things is an overemphasis on details, rules, standards, and schedules. The larger goals are missed because Blockers don’t see the forest for the trees. They overanalyze the task to the point of paralysis. What makes this behavior bullying is the severe exclusion of a humanistic, encouraging, and affiliative style of interpersonal relations and an overwhelming inflexibility to be open to others’ points of view. This emotional deficit prevents an interpersonal relationship from developing with the Blocker.

The Braggart

A Braggart is a self-adoring and self-absorbed narcissist who seeks to inflate his own self-image. He controls others primarily through long-winded soliloquies about himself and keeping the focus on him. We are using the male pronoun here for a reason. According to Wendy T. Behary, the founder and clinical director of the Cognitive Therapy Center of New Jersey who maintains a private practice specializing in narcissism, as well as other experts in the field, more than 75 percent of narcissists are male. One explanation is that men have a larger amygdala than women. (This is a part of the brain that triggers a competitive quest for dominance and aggression.) Women, who can be narcissistic as well, will express it differently through an obsession with personal appearance, vanity, or the status of their children. Braggarts have an insatiable need to be the center of attention which, in itself, limits the capacity to be empathic or remorseful. The Braggart may not yell and scream to show his superiority but will smother others’ contributions by expressing an overly inflated sense of self.
He will insert, assert, intrude, decree, dictate, and declare his opinion or experience on a subject matter even if he knows nothing about it. A Braggart suppresses other people’s creativity and prevents them from developing and maintaining a healthy sense of self and personal self-worth.

**The Brute**

The Beliers, Blockers, and Braggarts have a negative, toxic effect on others in the workplace. They poison morale and reduce productivity, but we believe the Brute is the most dangerous and damaging to people and to the organization. This type of bully uses antisocial, overly aggressive, and brutish behavior to dominate others with blatant disregard for their rights and sometimes safety. Brutes bully viciously and consistently to the point where his target stops performing, leaves the company, or suffers mentally and physically. Brutes create fearful, antisocial, and unproductive work environments. Their behavior can cause severe psychological and emotional distress. Brutish behaviors violate all appropriate standards of civil behavior at work.

**Sociopaths Can Be Introverted or Extroverted**

Everyone has within themselves the capacity to be overly assertive, critical, and impatient from time to time as it is in our nature. In centuries past we have had to act in aggressive ways to protect or defend ourselves for survival. Bullying is different. Bullying is grounded in a need for self-gratification to shore up feelings of fear, insecurity, low self-esteem, self-worth, and self-confidence, poor interpersonal skills, and a lack of maturity and confidence.
The bully’s skewed persona has emerged from their basic temperament, their past life experiences, and the cultural influences to which they were exposed. It is also very possible that they have endured a traumatic experience in the past that has had a major influence on them.

A bully’s persona develops from the influence of the internal and biological tendencies of their temperament:

• Introverted bullies tend to be moody Beliers or controlling Blocker; while
• Extroverted bullies tend to be talkative Braggarts and aggressive Brutes.

Realizing this difference is important as it determines your response. Whereas the introverted types require a patient, honest, paced, and prudent mode of communication, the extroverted types may require that the target become more assertively extroverted themselves.

**What to Expect from Introverted and Extroverted Bullies**

Introverts are better at delaying gratification than extroverts. Delaying gratification is an essential life skill as it helps a person to better manage themselves. Introverts can have good social skills. Beliers and Blockers will be more likely to hear what it is the target needs to say as opposed to Braggarts and Brutes who will probably respond much more quickly and parry aside or deflect the conversation.
Upon making a mistake, introverts are likely to carefully slow down to investigate how that happened, whereas extraverts speed up and don’t dwell on the past. Extroverts are more interested in a fast way of problem-solving or decision-making. There is a better chance of getting the necessary behavior change from the Belier and the Blocker than the Braggart and the Brute.

Other differences include:

- Introverts are contained, whereas extroverts are gregariously expressive;
- Introverts are conceptual, whereas extroverts are practical;
- Introverts may accommodate information, whereas extroverts question it; and
- Introverts feel and perceive, while extroverts think and judge.

The Blend of Brute and Braggart

The Braggart and the Brute are both extroverted and have behaviors that mesh. Many times the bully will employ both types of bullying in their behavior. The blend of Braggart and Brute is an overtalkative, self-absorbed, and vain person who is also blunt, angry, antisocial, and emotionally impulsive. He is not aware of and does he care about his negative impact on others’ sensitivities, job performance, or the reputation of the company. If the bully is a Brute 75 percent of the time and a Braggart 25 percent of the time, use tips for engaging the Brute first, but be ready to bring in your understanding of the Braggart as well. If it is 50/50, then start with the type that has caused the greater number of incidents and script out a plan for both types of engagement.
The Blend of Belier and Blocker

You may encounter the blend of the Belier and the Blocker. Both are introverted with very deep insecurities about their position in the workplace and a strong need to control the work environment. There is a greater possibility of a better relationship resulting from confrontation with the Belier, Blocker, and Braggart than with the Brute. This is mostly due to the inability of the Brute to control his anger.

Character Deficits of the Four Types of Bully

**Belier**  
*Does not* practice honesty, fairness, mutual respect, or sincerity with others; and is not genuine in promise-keeping due to being indifferent, ambivalent, and unremorseful about causing harm to others.

*Greatest fear: Being vulnerable and being perceived as jealous*

**Blocker**  
*Does not* practice openness, agreeableness, generosity, nondefensive listening, good interpersonal skills, humility, sound judgment, and strength of mind when dealing with the emotions of others.

*Greatest fear: Dealing with emotions and losing control of work*
**Braggart**  
*Does not* practice self-honesty and openness to feedback. Lacks genuine self-confidence, empathy, compassion, politeness, and team-building skills. Has no regard for the rights of others, especially if they hold different opinions or points of view. Refuses to show deference to the intrinsic and personal worth of others or to listen to others.  

**Greatest fear:** Losing approval, prestige, or status and outright rejection

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**Brute**  
*Does not* practice impulse control of emotions, delay of gratification, or patience when dealing with others. Lacks emotional strength for ego management and self-discipline. Does not monitor impact of anger on others and abuses power.  

**Greatest fear:** Being seen as powerless or being tricked by others
About the Authors

Peter J. Dean, MS, PhD, and Molly D. Shepard, MS, MSM, are joint partners in The Leaders Edge/Leaders By Design, a leadership development and executive coaching firm dedicated to helping boards, C-suite executives, and high-potential leaders. Their programs are focused on enhancing the leadership skills of women and men, including their ability to embrace, understand, and leverage the complexities inherent in a diverse workforce.

They have consulted and coached for major companies, such as ARAMARK, AstraZeneca, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Campbell Soup Company, Comcast, Chubb, DuPont, GlaxoSmithKline, Independence Blue Cross, The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, Johnson & Johnson, KPMG, Lincoln Financial, Novartis, Microsoft, MetLife, Shire, Nasdaq, Pfizer, Exelon, Teva Pharmaceuticals, University of Pennsylvania Health System, Wawa, and Wilmington Trust.

For more information, visit http://the-leaders-edge.com/.

Peter has been on faculty at the Wharton School and the Fels Center of Government at the University of Pennsylvania, Penn State University, Fordham University, the University of Iowa, the University of Tennessee, and the American College, teaching courses in leadership, change management, ethics, and communications. He was honored with teaching
awards at Penn State University, the Wharton School, and the University of Tennessee. He designed two master degree programs for Penn State University in instructional systems and management. He codeigned the physician executive MBA program at the University of Tennessee.

Peter was editor of *Performance Improvement Quarterly* and board director of the International Board of Standards for Training, Performance and Instruction. He is the author of *Leadership for Everyone: How to Apply the Seven Essential Skills to Become a Great Motivator, Influencer, and Leader*.

Peter holds an MS in organizational dynamics from the University of Pennsylvania and a PhD in education from the University of Iowa.

Molly has more than 25 years of experience in career counseling, leadership development, executive coaching, and executive search. Through her leadership as chairman, president, and cofounder of Manchester Inc., one of the world’s largest career-development consulting firms, she helped develop the highest standards for excellence in program design and delivery. Under her guidance, Manchester became one of the nation’s top human resources consulting firms, helping thousands of people a year transition into new jobs and reach their potential as leaders. It was subsequently acquired by AccuStaff Inc. Prior to that, Molly was regional vice president of Hay Career Consultants, a division of the Hay Group and previously vice president of Diversified Search, Inc., a Philadelphia-based executive search firm.

Molly has served on numerous nonprofit and for-profit boards and is chair emeritus of the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania and WHYY Inc. and president emeritus of the Pennsylvania Women’s Forum. Molly is a
member of the board of directors of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society–Greater Delaware Valley Chapter, and WHYY Inc.

Molly received the Brava! Achievement Award, given to a top regional female CEO by SmartCEO magazine, the Trailblazer Award from Philadelphia Magazine, the Philadelphia Business Journal’s Women of Distinction Award, the Beta Gamma Sigma Award from the LeBow College of Business at Drexel University, the Woman One Award from Drexel University College of Medicine, and the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce Paradigm Award, as the outstanding woman business leader of the year.

Molly is the coauthor of Breaking into the Boys’ Club and Stop Whining and Start Winning (Penguin, 2005).

Molly holds a BA from Wheaton College, an MS in psychological services and counseling from the University of Pennsylvania, an MSM in leadership from American College, and an honorary doctorate of humanities from West Chester University.

Molly and Peter are married to each other and are the parents of four children. They live in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.