

8 Ways to Handle Bullies at Work

Arnold Sanow – www.arnoldsanow.com

Bullies play out their cruel games everywhere. No matter their size, shape, age, or where you find them, bullies are masters of manipulation. To gain control, they deliberately intimidate others and knowingly abuse their rights. They're not interested in getting along, cooperating, or creating win-win situations; they just want to control, win and rule. Bullies reject reason and rational efforts. As a result, they diminish, demean, and dictate, all as part of their plan to dominate.

Bullies act superior, as reflected by their characteristic condescending attitude of arrogance. When something isn't up to their approval, they see others as inept and incompetent, and go on a rampage, snarling about how awful and stupid everyone is. They feel quite justified in their outrage, treating people with disdain and disrespect.

Adopt strategies that support your ability to stand up to them and stand your ground. Here are 8 ways to deal with bullies from the book, "Get Along with Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere ... 8 keys to creating enduring connections with customers, co-workers ... even kids" by Arnold Sanow and Sandra Strauss.

- Take an assertive approach early to prevent escalation. Bullies will likely continue to target you unless you establish and enforce your boundaries.
- Demonstrate that unacceptable behavior is unacceptable to you. Let them know they can't get away with it. Silence gives them the green light, so establish and maintain clear boundaries to ensure your needs and desires are respected. Speak your piece to keep your peace.

- Be forceful. When people don't respond to peaceful, reasonable approaches, it's appropriate to become more aggressive in dealing with them to equalize the balance of power. However, never resort to physical aggression. Bullies are out to win only what they want and try to dominate you in the process, which is an infringement of your rights. By showing them that you mean business in how you communicate, you're preserving your rights and they will likely back off. Keep your senses and act wisely.
- Hold bullies accountable for their actions. Remember, they don't want to cooperate with you, just control you.
- Speak with authority and with a commanding presence. Any perceived weakness makes you susceptible to being bullied.
- State your demands using "you" statements. People acting aggressively often run roughshod over statements made from personal perspectives and are more likely to fling them back at you. Tell them what you want in a firm way; it will get their attention: "You need to speak to me with courtesy and in a civil tone."
- Don't get hooked by their taunts. If you are tempted to retort – don't, instead address them by name and tell them to stop.
- Avoid giving them long explanations about your actions. The more reasons you give, the more they can manipulate and twist them around and fire them back at you. Be clear that certain things are non-negotiable and not open to debate.

Arnold Sanow, MBA, CSP (Certified Speaking Professional) is a speaker, trainer, coach and facilitator. He is the author of 6 books to include, “Get Along with Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere” and “Present with Power, Punch and Pizzazz.” He was recently named by successful meetings magazine as one of the top 5 best “bang for the buck” speakers in the USA. www.arnoldsanow.com --- speaker@arnoldsanow.com