

THIS IS THE BOOK BOSSES DON'T WANT YOU TO READ!

**WHO'S AFRAID OF THE
BIG, BAD BOSS?**



How to Survive 13 Types of
Dysfunctional, Disrespectful,
Dishonest Little Dictators

MARILYN HAIGHT

Available at Amazon.com
Worded Write Publishing
Republished February 2008
ISBN 978-0-9800390-1-6
Paperback
250 pages, 6x9
\$15.00

Marilyn Haight
20403 N. Lake Pleasant Rd.
Suite 117-150
Peoria, AZ 85382
(623) 825-3845
E-mail: info@bigbadboss.com
Web: <http://www.bigbadboss.com>

A NEW METHOD OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH EMERGES FROM "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Boss? 13 Types and How to Survive Them"

THE METHOD

As is typical in the behavioral sciences, I used qualitative research methods in collecting information for this book. By combining some aspects of Participatory Research with some aspects of Phenomenology, I developed a method I refer to as "**Engaged Observance.**" This study cannot be considered pure Participatory Research because the people I observed were unaware that they were involved in the study. So I use the term "**engaged,**" rather than "participatory," because the subjects of this study and I were mutually involved in the conduct of business as work associates.

This study cannot be considered pure Phenomenological Research, either, because it is about the behavior of other people, not just my internal responses to them and the environment. However, I did follow the principles of Phenomenology in using myself as an instrument for capturing the data. Therefore, I use the term "**observance,**" rather than "observation," because this method is more than observing; it involves complying with the rigors of a generally accepted research method, Phenomenology—a method that involves the use of one's self as an instrument on which a subject or environment acts.

The *Engaged Observance* research method required much more personal stamina than I had anticipated because of my dual role as an employee and a researcher.

THE RATIONALE

I believe that this method of research would not have emerged from academia because of the way in which academic research is conducted today. Academic research requires notifying subjects that they are participants in a study, getting their approval to be observed, and then finding ways to disguise the actual purpose of the study to prevent subjects from contaminating the process and the results. While the academically-sanctioned approach may protect subjects, to a degree, from potential psychologically-harmful effects, it risks contamination because subjects are more likely to perform *unnaturally* when they are aware that they are receiving special attention.

While "**Engaged Observance**" runs the risk of being perceived as a maverick method, it assures that subjects will not contaminate the study because they remain unaware that a study of any kind is in progress. Another benefit of *Engaged Observance* is that the subjects are always free of any potentially harmful effects because they are not being manipulated in any way—they have absolute control of the situation—and they are anonymous in the report.

I chose not to use quantitative or statistical research methods because those methods were inconsistent with my intent. My intent was simply to describe in detail some of the behavior that occurs in organizations and the impact of that behavior on individuals, groups and organizations. I did not intend to develop predictions about the frequency with which certain behavior may occur, the conditions under which it may occur, or the cause-and-effect relationships of the behavior. Those are topics for consideration by other researchers in future studies.

THE REPORT

In her book, *Social Science & The Self: Personal Essays on an Art Form*, Susan Krieger lends support to my method of reporting. Krieger challenges the way in which social science research is typically documented, saying that it is inappropriate to make the researcher seem invisible in the report, which is done only to make research findings *appear* to be objective. She emphasizes that the social-science researcher is always present in the work because actions are understood through the perceptions, or unique filters, of the researcher as he or she watches and interacts with subjects in a mutual relationship. She adds that social science research is *never* a pure representation of the experience of others, but is *always* the subjective report of a researcher's experience of others, which can be influenced by all that the researcher has experienced and learned in her or his lifetime.

Krieger also states that including information in a study about the researcher and the researcher's experience with subjects may add clarity, depth and meaning to the work. I was personally involved in the events reported in this book—not just an outside observer. My perceptions and interpretations are the products of my unique set of life experiences, filtered through the discipline of qualitative research methods as I understand them. Another researcher may have seen things differently.

I have not identified relevant behavioral theories in this book because it is intended to be a lay-person's manual, an employee-survival guide, not an academic report. Validation of the profiles in this book will come from employees who read them and say, "Yes, I know a boss who acts just like that." In fact, a reporter at the Washington Post received validation of all 13 types from readers and reported that result in the December 11, 2005 issue.

GOING FORWARD

I hope that members of the academic community will critique and expand on this work in such a way that we may continue to learn about the effects of managerial misbehavior and ways to remain unharmed by it. I will be satisfied with my work if *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Boss? 13 Types and How to Survive Them* helps individuals survive difficult work situations unharmed.

Marilyn Haight