

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

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MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY HURT ON JOB

"I am at my wits end and need some relevant advice on what to do...."

"...The workplace is very intense and can get painful at times as it is hard on the back, hands and feet...but I try to keep up with the pace even though I have a bad back."

"My boss...has to be the worst boss in the world. When he first hired me I was promised several things that weren't delivered. A certain hourly pay rate, health benefits and set hours. I was willing to over-look these things because employment is so low that it's beyond difficult to find a decent job or any job for that matter. For the past year and a half I have put up with this man belittling me, calling me names such as stupid, incompetent, lazy, crazy and a baby. He is constantly looking for reasons to make me feel like crap. I recently had an emotional break down at work and had to see a therapist for the first time in my life and was put on medication because of the severity of the situation. I've been injured on the job twice and both times my boss hasn't asked if I was okay or needed to see a doctor. The first time he told me I needed to learn how to walk...and the second time he told me that I needed to watch what I was doing before doing it. He is now always telling me that he wants someone else or is going to hire someone else etc. which makes me feel scared of losing my job because I can't afford to lose it. I know that in any other situation I would normally just say screw you and quit, but what can I do when I have no alternatives? How can I deal with this major jerk who is taking advantage of me?"

Dear Hurting Employee,

It sounds like you've had a pretty awful year and a half on this job. The psychological hurt from being harassed is bad enough, but being physically hurt on the job, too, makes it even worse. You've got a lot going on; following are some things you can do to improve your situation.

First, take care of your mental health by continuing to see your therapist; he or she can help you recognize that you do have alternatives. I'm assuming that your therapist is either a psychiatrist or has referred you to a medical doctor for prescription medication. If this is the case, ask your therapist if you

qualify for a leave of absence either due to the condition or the effects of the medication.

Second, take care of your physical health. You say you have a bad back and your job is hard on the back, hands and feet. Has your condition been diagnosed by a medical doctor? If so, it may be possible for you to qualify for a medical leave of absence while your condition heals. When you return to work, you may also qualify for accommodations in your working conditions under the Americans with Disabilities Act (<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>) to relieve physical stress. Talk with your doctor about this.

After you've had a chance to relax and step back from this situation so you can look at it objectively, and also to boost your self-confidence, update your resume and begin a job search even if you return to your old job. You say employment is low, which makes me wonder what region you work in—on average, employment is high across the country right now indicating that there are many job opportunities available.

Back on the job, begin a dialogue with your boss. Prepare a written list of the promises he made to you when you were hired, then make an appointment and to meet with him in a place at work where there are no distractions. Tell your boss that you expected that, by this time, the promises he made to you would be fulfilled. Show your boss your written list of those promises including exactly what he said to you, or what you remember, and ask when you can expect to see them.

It sounds like safety might also be an issue in your workplace. If there is a union, ask a union representative if your working conditions might violate OSHA regulations. If not, contact the OSHA agency in your region and ask them what can be done—here's a link: <http://www.osha.gov/html/RAmap.html>

Next, tell your boss that calling you names is inappropriate and unacceptable and must stop (yes, be this direct because this is a personal attack—your boss has no right or authority to belittle you). No one takes advantage of us without our permission so you are now going to take away the permission you've inadvertently granted to your boss by tolerating his bad behavior for one and one-half years. Do not threaten—just tell your boss you need to be treated professionally so you can concentrate on your job. Change may take awhile; if he continues calling you names, write down exactly what he says and when he says at each occurrence. Send him a memo reminding him that his unprofessional behavior interferes with your concentration on the job which is not good for business. Keep a copy of all your written work in a safe place away from your work location.

Get well and take things one step at a time.