

# Jerks at Work: Tips on Harnessing Negativity & Turning it Around

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STATE CONFERENCE  
AUG 27-AUG 30

# Welcome & Introduction

**HELLO**  
my name is



# Introductions!

What is something new or inspiring that you heard so far this week?



# Housekeeping:

**You'll need your mobile devices out today.**

**Slides are available - no strings attached:**

**<https://www.hranswers.org/AZSHRM19>**

Resources are listed at the end of this presentation

# The Plan for Today:



## Introductions & Welcome

- ▶ Bullying, Jerks and Negativity 101
- ▶ Profiles of a Jerk
- ▶ The Cost of Negativity & Jerks in the Workplace
- ▶ What to do about it!?
- ▶ Prevention Techniques
- Contest time & offer for those who are interested
- Closing, Resources, Q&A

# Let's Jump In: Negativity, Jerks & Bullies



# Negativity & “Negativity Bias”

Our brains are wired to be more sensitive to negative news.



# Jerks

- ▶ Obnoxious
- ▶ Nitwit
- ▶ Moron
- ▶ **Bothersome**

## Dictionary

Search for a word



**bul·ly**<sup>1</sup>

/ˈbʊlᵻ/

*noun*

1. a person who habitually seeks to harm or intimidate those whom they perceive as vulnerable.  
*synonyms:* persecutor, oppressor, tyrant, tormentor, browbeater, intimidator, coercer, subjugator;  
[More](#)

*verb*

1. seek to harm, intimidate, or coerce (someone perceived as vulnerable).  
"her 11- year-old son has been constantly bullied at school"  
*synonyms:* persecute, oppress, tyrannize, torment, browbeat, intimidate, cow, coerce, strong-arm, subjugate, domineer; [More](#)



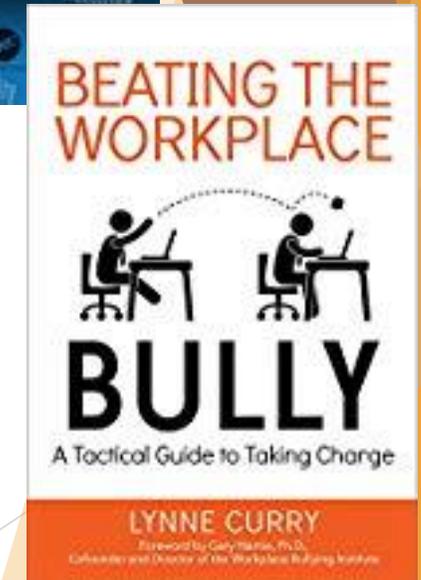
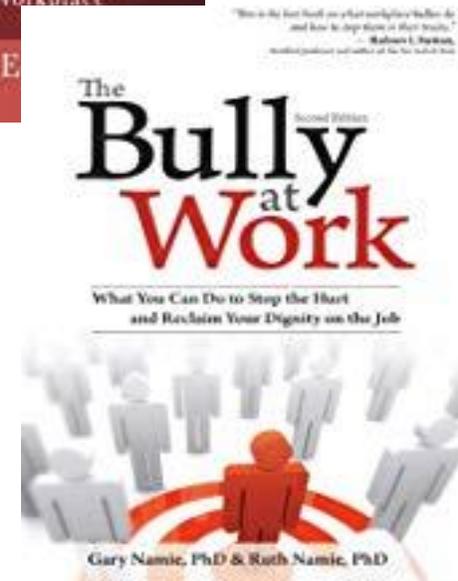
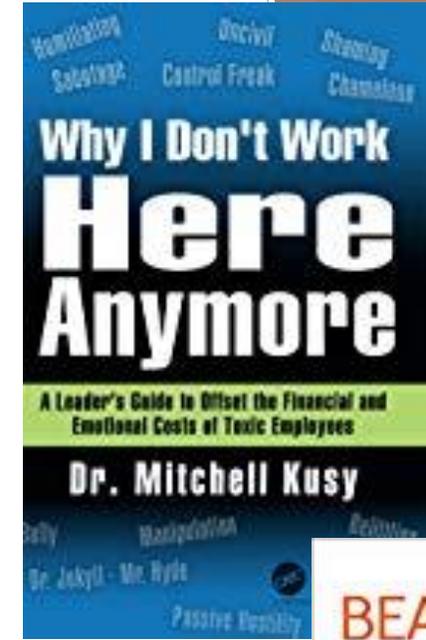
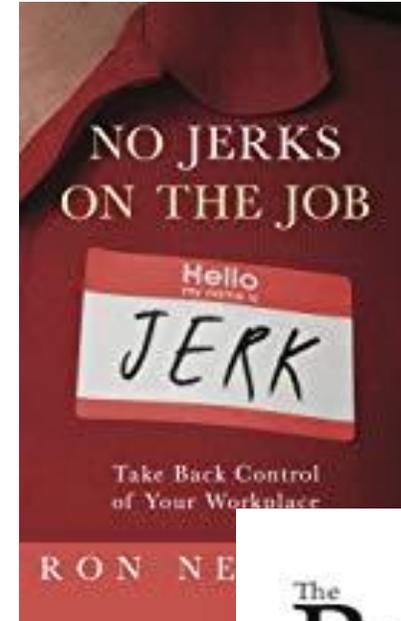
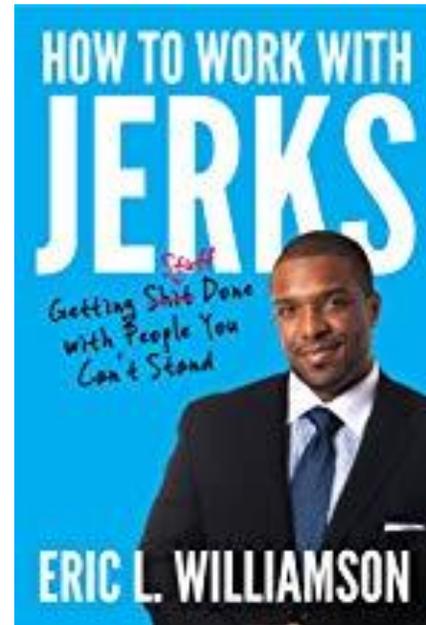
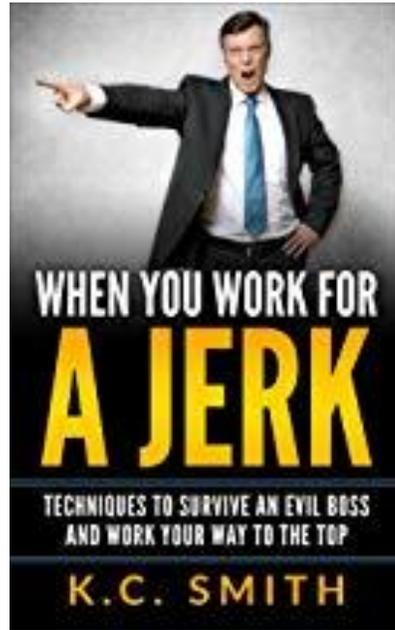
Translations, word origin, and more definitions

From Oxford

*Feedback*

Is it really that big of a deal?

Ask Amazon.



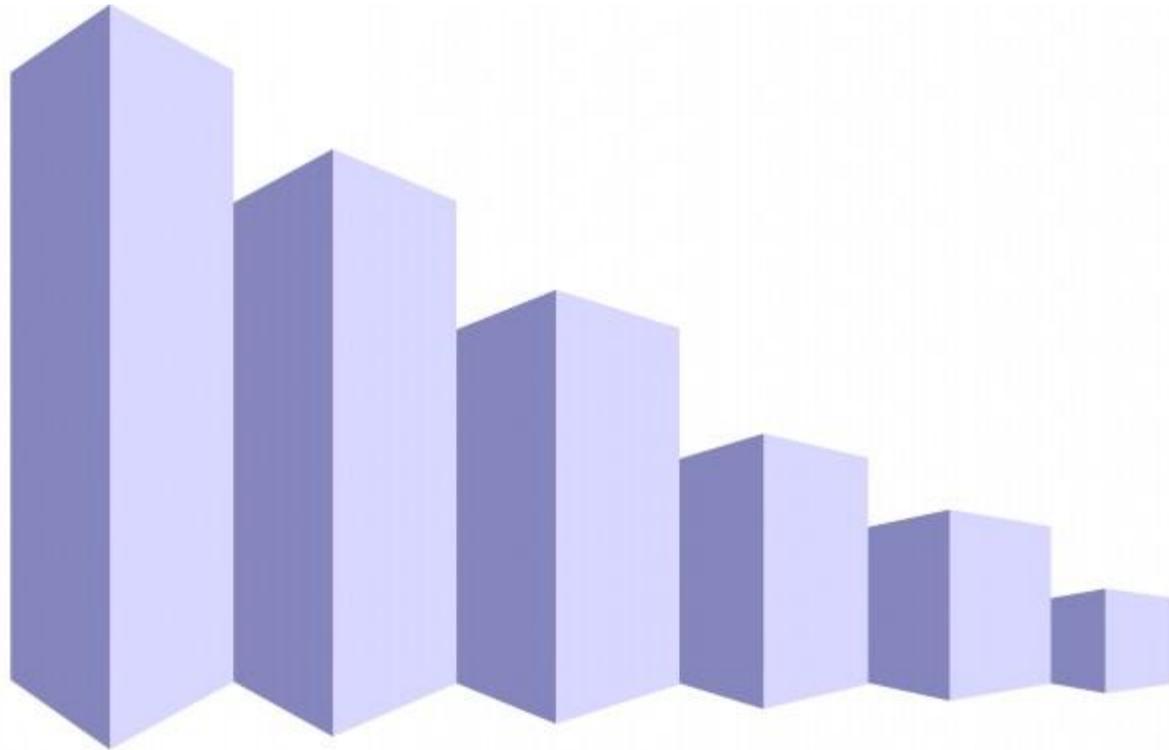
Search Term:

“workplace bully” = 619 results

Poll Time:

Have you ever been bullied at work or witnessed it?

# By the Numbers: 2017 Workplace Bullying Institute, National Survey



# Q) How many American workers are affected?

- ✓ 19% of Americans are bullied
- ✓ 19% witness it
- ✓ 61% of Americans are aware of abusive conduct in the workplace

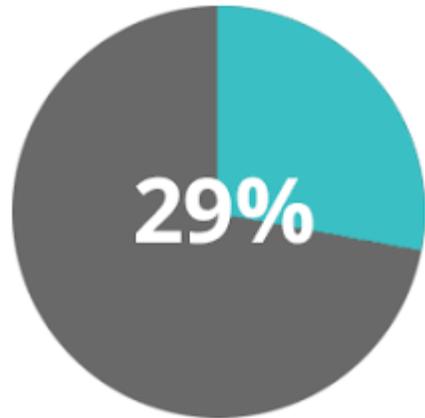
# Q) Who is doing the bullying; and who are the targets?

## *Who is this about?*

- **70%** of perpetrators are men
- **60%** of targets are women
- Hispanics are the most frequently bullied race
- **61%** of bullies are bosses



## Q) What do people do?



of targets **remain silent** about their experiences

# States Makes Moves

## **Example: NY State Healthy Workplace Bill**

Would make it permissible for employees to sue for:  
physical, psychological and economic harm

**Based on:**  
abusive treatment on the job.

# Poll Time: Anti-Bullying Regulations



# 2017 WBI Survey:

- 77% of Americans support enacting a new law.

# The Roots of Negativity



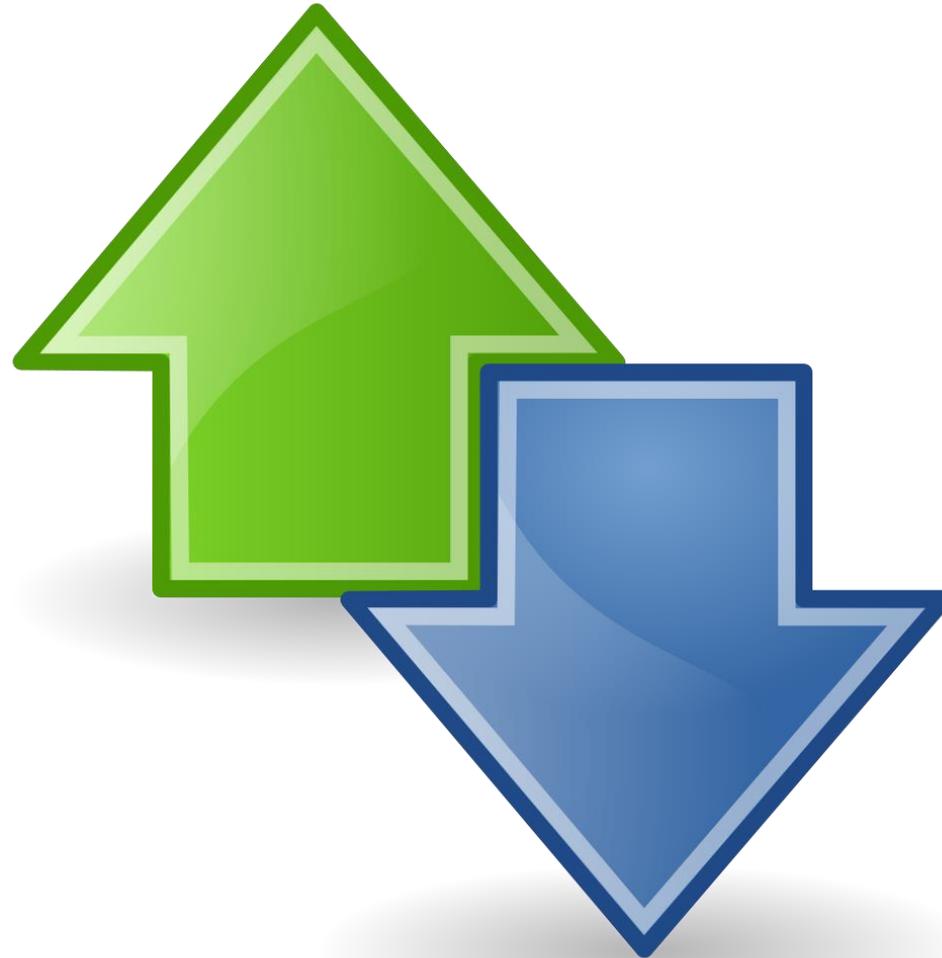
Most people who are perceived as negative, or are labeled “jerks,” have a low emotional intelligence.

*(by choice or by nature)*

# Emotional Intelligence

The ability to **be aware of, control and express** one's emotions ... and to **handle** interpersonal **relationships** judiciously and **empathically**.

# Poll: High vs. Low Emotional Intelligence



# Profile of Jerk: 7 Main Types

- 1) Tattler
- 2) Messy
- 3) Noisy / Disruptive
- 4) Backstabber
- 5) Gossiper
- 6) Saboteur
- 7) Hostile Work Environment Creator



Poll Time:

How bothersome is each kind of jerk?



# What Negativity & Bullying Looks Like

- ▶ Social isolation
- ▶ Silent treatment
- ▶ Spreading rumors
- ▶ Excessive criticism
- ▶ Excessive monitoring
- ▶ Withholding information
- ▶ Depriving responsibility
- ▶ Attacking a team member's views or beliefs



# The Cost of Jerks at Work: Liability & Beyond

*“[Workplace] Bullying is domestic violence  
where the abuser is on the payroll.”*

*~ Journal of Organizational Culture, 2012*

# See you in court!

- ▶ 45 litigated workplace bullying cases
- ▶ Supervisors were generally named as the perpetrator
- ▶ 1/3 of the organizations/employers represented in the 45 cases already had an anti-bullying policy

*Workplace Bullying: A Review of Litigated Cases*, by  
William Martin & Helen LeVan, 2010



# Consequences:

## What happens when we find out?

- ▶ EAP Contact
- ▶ Union intervention
- ▶ EEOC Charges
- ▶ Investigations
- ▶ Training
- ▶ **Job performance declines**
- ▶ Attendance and morale are affected

# Direct Costs

- ✓ Legal fees
- ✓ Paid sick leave
- ✓ Absenteeism and lower productivity
- ✓ OT to cover for employees who are out
- ✓ Professional intervention costs



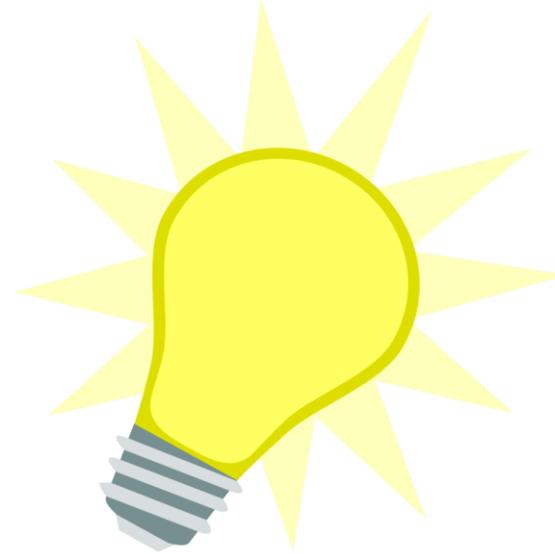
# Indirect Costs

- ✓ Higher turnover
- ✓ Less innovation and creativity
- ✓ Poor team collaboration
- ✓ Demotivated employees
- ✓ Poor customer service (based on negative organizational culture)



# What to Do About Jerks at Work:

- ❑ Pre-Work
- ❑ Main Concepts
- ❑ Normative Approach
- ❑ Practical Approach



# Pre-Work: Take a Step Back & Analyze

- ▶ What are the antecedents of bullying?
  - Organizational culture
  - Climate on the team
  - Personal factors of both the jerk, bully and the victims/targets.

# What to Do About it?

## Institute some “Rules”

1. Recognize that jerks cause negativity to spread
2. Call out jerks: “leave them no place to hide”
3. Hire and fire for attitude
4. Create policies that support a jerk-free workplace

- Author and Researcher, Robert Sutton

# Normative Approach

Create policies and enforce norms that address:

- ▶ Moral rights
- ▶ Care ethics
- ▶ Virtue ethics



# Practical Approach for HR Professionals

What came before the bullying?

What was the bullying behavior?

What were/are the consequences?

# Practical Approach for All Employees: {HEY}!

Behavior

Impact

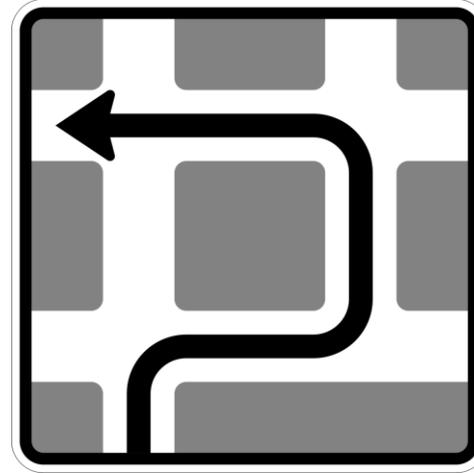
Expectation

# Take Charge. Flip the script.

- 1) First of all, we don't  
[\_\_\_\_\_] like that here.
- 2) When you [said/did]  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- 3) [\_\_\_\_\_]  
happened.
- 4) From this second forward,  
[\_\_\_\_\_].]



# Working on Positivity: one thing leads to another



The great news is: our brains are not “hard-wired”

- Patterns of thinking and behaving can be re-routed.

# They Key to Combatting the Jerks : Open Communication

1. 1:1's
2. Skip-level 1:1's
3. 360 Reviews
4. Peer mentoring
5. Adopt a culture of gratitude
6. Allow anonymous reporting
7. Employee satisfaction and exit surveys
8. Training to reinforce policies and norms



# Why Even Try?

- ▶ Put simply: positivity is **GOOD** for your health.
  - ▶ It is also **good** for your performance!



# Optimists and Positive People:

- ▶ Optimists are generally **healthier** and they have a **stronger immune system**.
- ▶ Optimistic sales reps **sold more** than a third more policies than their pessimistic counterparts.
- ▶ Complaining and chronic negativity **shrinks your hippocampus**: which is where you problem-solve and generate intelligent thought.

Studies by: University of Pennsylvania; Dartmouth, University of Michigan, the May Clinic, University of Colorado, Yale, University of Kentucky and Stanford University



# On Being Realistic ...

Being in a perpetual state of positivity or bliss is unrealistic.

- ▶ Be self-aware
- ▶ Reframe when possible
- ▶ Seek balance
- ▶ And, as they say: don't sweat the small stuff



# What You CAN Do About it: Lifestyle Choices to Control Stress

1. Exercise
2. Deep breathing
3. Focus on your health and nutrition
4. Ask for help
5. Visit with a trusted team member or counselor
6. Engage in a relaxing hobby

## Before we move on:

1. Win your ticket to  
#AZSHRM20 + Book Giveaway

Text **AZSHRM19** to 33777

2. 15-minute quick-fire session

You're  
Invited

We can only control ourselves;  
our own thoughts and actions.

Change what you can.

Let the rest wash away.

*You go on creating your positive ripple.*



# Resources

## Books that I recommend on the topic:

- ▶ *The Book of Joy*, by Dalai Lama & Desmond Tutu
- ▶ *Perfect Phrases for Dealing with Difficult People*, by Susan Benjamin
- ▶ *Stress is a Choice*, published by Simple Truths
- ▶ *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*ck*, by Mark Manson
- ▶ *I Can See Clearly Now*, Dr. Wayne Dyer
- ▶ *The No A-Hole Rule*, Robert

## Articles & sites that bookmarked or read in preparation for this session:

- ▶ 2017 Workplace Bullying Survey (Workplace Bullying Institute)
- ▶ *Bullying in the Workplace, Normative & Process Oriented Approaches*, Journal of Business Ethics, 2008
- ▶ *Workplace Bullying: A Review of Litigated Cases*, By William Martin & Helen LeVan, 2010
- ▶ *7 Types of Jerks Found in Every Office*, John Boitnott, VIP Contributor
- ▶ *Lawsuits Walk in on Two Feet: The Bully in the Workplace*, Journal of Organizational Culture, 2012

# What questions do you have?

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**HRAnswers.org**

Our Mission: Your people.

# Your Facilitator:

## Niki Ramirez, MBA/PHR/SHRM-CP/THRP

- ▶ I'm a certified human resources consultant and the founder of HRAnswers.org. We focus on providing practical, impactful HR consultation to small business leaders so that they can relax and focus on their goals.
- ▶ I believe that professional human resources support isn't only for big companies with huge budgets. HR support is something that every size business deserves! I decided to take what I learned in big-Company HR and design a process to help small businesses create HR programs that align with their business goals *and* organizational culture to yield maximum results.
- ▶ Our goal is to help our clients reduce business risk and dramatically improve the employee experience. Clients trust my expert team and I to work on a variety of complex HR projects like employee handbooks, job descriptions, performance plans, and sticky hiring and firing situations.

