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Just How Bad IS That Person You Work For?

By Susan Dunn

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Coach & Consultant

Since I work in Emotional Intelligence, I get emails about some pretty awful managers (as well as colleagues, subordinates and peers). Work takes up a lot of our life, and misery at work is chronically stressful. The questions often amount to, "Can I `fix' this if I learn more Emotional Intelligence?"

The answer is "yes," but probably not in the way you're thinking. Can you make a nasty person nice by using your EQ skills, such as empathy? You might be able to make the situation better, but it's a big "it depends." Here's what it depends upon.

As has been said, `a problem you can fix; a fact you just have to live with," and you have to know what you're looking at. Can you ever control someone else and make them the way you want them to be? No. Can you change them? Sometimes, if they have the desire to get along. Can you change your viewpoint? Always.

Now how do you tell what personality you can work with, and what you can't? Narcissistic rage. Get used to that term; you're going to be hearing it more. It's known as "the famous narcissistic rage." You know it if you've had it coming at you. It's a blind, ugly, mindless and virulent kind of rage; an attack.

Now, consider a fairly typical workplace scenario. Your manager is not of the highest EQ. The stress is building as a deadline approaches. Suddenly (s)he blows. Something someone did, or said sets them off, and they burst into a fit of rage. It could be yelling, or swearing, or throwing something, or walking out in a tantrum.

So the next step ... let's say you decide to try some of your EQ skills. Using your empathy, you realize the person was under added stress at the time. Still, you can't tolerate being called a fathead, or incompetent boob, or Captain F-up or whatever the insulting epithet was, and this has been the last straw in a bad working situation to begin with. After some reflection, when you've calmed down and been able to think it over, you find a good time to go in and talk it out with the manager.

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You bring up what happened. You say how it made you feel, request to be treated with more respect, say "let's let bygones be bygones but ..." and generally try to talk it out.

And the reaction? If the person is workable with, they show some introspection, remorse, and desire to make things better. They agree they weren't at their best. They engage in a conversation about it and take a look at what's going on.

If, on the other hand, they fly into a further rage, what you've done is further enrage a true narcissistic manager, and there's your clue.

Such statements as, "I know you were under stress," or "I'm doing the best I can under the circumstances and want to make this department shine. How can I...?" or "It doesn't help me do my

best work when I'm called 'an idiot,'" are phrases which will engender rage in a narcissist, and some semblance of connection from a nice-guy-gone-bad-for-the-moment.

Narcissists have weak self-esteem and also may be control freaks. Those statements bring up feelings in them they can't deal with, so they rage. To them almost anything you say implies that they, themselves, are at fault (weak, incompetent, out-of-control), which they quickly will turn into being something YOUR fault, and then the mindless rage, because it makes them feel better.

And here's the real test of Emotional Intelligence. Empathy and communication skills (interpersonal relationship skills) are competencies, but there are others, such as Personal Power, Intuition, and Reality-testing.

In this case, how do we apply them? Personal Power means recognizing that you are not helpless and hopeless. You may be helpless and hopeless in the face of trying to change the narcissist, but you are not hopeless and helpless in facing up to the reality and taking care of yourself by asking for a transfer, covering yourself while you must remain there, not taking any of this personally, taking care not to reveal any 'weaknesses' which can (and will) be used against you, documenting what needs documenting, and taking action on your own behalf, as in getting your resume ready.

Intuition? Your instincts in such an interchange should be shouting at you - THIS IS NOT GOOD. How your intuition talks to you is a personal thing. You may get a sinking feeling where you just "know" the person can't be approached at a human level and means ill. The hair could stand up on the back of your neck. Your palms could sweat. You could get a chill or weak knees - fear, in any of its manifestations. There's nothing wimpy about this. A person who truly means ill to others, and in fact delights in serving it out, should raise such a reaction in you, and it should be heeded. That's what our gut instincts are for: to keep us safe.

This gives you the tools for quick reality-testing. The physiological responses you get from your body help you to test reality. If the meeting had gone well, you would get the equivalent of a warm feeling in your tummy. Again, this isn't a wussy thing. You should have a feeling of satisfaction and hope, with accompanying physiological manifestations. A letting up of tension. A relief. You might even end up laughing with the women (or man), as you both let off steam, agree it went poorly, and decide to move

forward.

The person who slips into bad behavior under stress, but shows some insight into their behavior, and concern for others, could benefit from coaching. They may be depressed, overwhelmed, or simply not have had the opportunity to learn EQ skills, or to understand how their behavior effects others. They may also have moved into a position where they no longer get the kind of feedback that helps us all adjust our behavior to mature levels, and stay honest.

The person who shows no remorse and no insight, is not coachable, and they are not "fixable" by you.

If you get the message (from your gut feelings) you're dealing with a person who doesn't care, PAY ATTENTION. Then it's time to protect yourself, and do what you can not to raise the narcissistic rage again, while you make plans to get yourself somewhere else. It can be a long-term stressful thing while you remain, but you can learn ways to tolerate it better, and also to decrease the chances of it falling on you again.

"Turning the other cheek" will not work with a narcissistic personality. What you will get is a bigger slap on the other cheek.

Don't let your empathy interfere with your common sense. You may sense the misery of the other person, the sagging ego, or the desperate need to control, but don't let this understanding of their motives over-ride the fact that the person is dishing out abuse. Whatever traumatic events in their past brought on this personality type, it is no excuse for bad behavior, and no reason to justify taking the abuse, so don't rationalize it. This is a good EQ example, because in this case you need to get out of the thinking brain (rationalizing) and back to the emotional brains (instincts) for the reality-testing.

People do get promoted who shouldn't be. Get the blinders off and use your EQ. It could save your career, not to mention your health.

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Computer Viruses are Bad Luck

By Maya Pinion

OK, so you caught a computer virus and your system is all screwed up and you're frustrated and angry and upset. Bad luck.

Here's something that might make you feel better ...

The universe has true balance. And if a computer virus causes bad luck for the user it can also cause

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bad luck for the person who launched it.

Computer virus creators are usually very young and do not realize, or care, that they are causing harm to others. They just think it's cool. What they don't realize is that when a virus is launched it also unleashes a mystical power into the world, a malevolent thing that does bad things and makes victims of other people.

What these teen and pre-teen computer terrorists also don't realize is what goes around comes around. The universe will get them. Sooner or later. Payback time. They cause you bad luck, bad luck will befall them. What goes around comes around. If they launch a virus, causing bad luck for millions of people, in return, that can unleash and focus millions of bad vibes, BIG bad luck, back at them. That could mean serious bad luck for the launcher of a virus. Perhaps their mother will finally become totally disgusted with their attitude and behavior and cease to love them. Maybe they'll end up in a foster home, too old for adoption. Or maybe they'll have to run away and live on the streets, with no place to hook up their computer. Or maybe they won't run away but will get a weird but temporary brain disease that prevents them from using a computer until they're old enough to use it responsibly. Bad luck for them.

The computer virus. Bad luck for you, worse luck for the one who launches it.

Maya Pinion is a New Age writer, contributing editor at News4Net and, for those who wish to discover their true destiny, highly recommends

Computer Viruses are Bad Luck

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