



**Are you being bullied?**  
**The subtle signs of bullying**

# Are you being bullied?

A skilled bully prefers to achieve victory before anyone realizes that a war has been declared.

Their covert methods take a heavy toll on the company and its employees, with the most capable people often the most emotionally overwhelmed.

It is far better to know you are being bullied than to feel miserable without knowing the cause, but the signs of bullying are often subtle, frustrating your attempts to make sense out of a confusing situation.

How is it possible that an eloquent, vivacious company leader is unfairly manipulating you?

Could it be that your boss, a charming, soft-spoken manager, has been intentionally undermining you?



# Are you being bullied?

Without obvious evidence of bullying, backstabbing and manipulation, you will probably remain uncertain (or even unaware) of the source of your problems. If this is your situation, there is hope. You can learn to detect the more subtle signs of being bullied, which in turn will lead you forward in your effort to fight back.

Subtle signs of bullying:

1. Your boss acts like a close friend
2. You're confused at work
3. You have to keep your guard up
4. You're miserable at work
5. Your job is ruining your life



# 1. Your boss acts like a close friend

A devious boss wants you to be unaware of his underlying motives and subtle manipulations. He may accomplish this by befriending you.

Perhaps he takes an interest in your hobbies or your family, or goes out of his way to involve you in social activities after work. He offers camaraderie by including you in a team of like-minded co-workers. He appears to support your advancement in the company. He slowly gains your trust.

Normally, there is nothing wrong with developing a close-knit team. But if your boss intends to abuse these relationships in order to increase his power, your positive work environment will not last.

Once he begins to exert his dominance, using the unfair and overly aggressive tactics of a bully, your job may become very unpleasant. But because of the overall culture of trust and camaraderie, you don't recognize the bullying (that was his intention). Instead, you feel growing frustration, confusion and anxiety, to the point of discontent or even desperation.



## 2. You're confused at work

In the early stages of being bullied at work, you may begin to feel confused about your relationship to someone or your role in the company. Don't feel bad if this happens to you. There is a good chance you are being skilfully manipulated by a workplace bully.

### **You feel confused by the situation at your job**

Your intuition tells you something is wrong, but you're not sure why.

You feel manipulated by someone, but there's no clear evidence.

You don't understand why you feel angry and frustrated.

You find it difficult to grasp your role in the company.



## 2. You're confused at work

### **You feel confused about your relationship with someone**

You enjoy a sense of camaraderie with someone, but something seems amiss.

You enjoy basking in the glow of their approval and attention, but wonder if they truly respect you.

Your relationship with them can be fulfilling one day, complex and confusing the next.

You admire them, yet distrust them, and you're not sure why.



## 2. You're confused at work

**You feel negative emotions around someone, without knowing why**

You feel uncomfortable whenever you talk to someone.

You feel frustrated, belittled, manipulated or disrespected.

You feel like they are always putting you on the spot, even when you didn't do anything wrong.

You often feel drained and irritated after dealing with that person, though you're not sure why.



# 3. You have to keep your guard up

When you find yourself hyper-alert to verbal attacks from someone, you are probably being bullied.

## **You are wary of someone**

You modify your normal speech and actions around someone because you don't want to leave yourself vulnerable to their criticisms.

You engage in superficial small talk whenever they are around. You choose your words carefully because you expect him to misunderstand your meaning.

You automatically expect them to criticize you.





# 3. You have to keep your guard up

## You are avoiding conflict with someone

You feel like you're walking on eggshells around someone because you want to avoid a confrontation.

You pretend to have a good relationship with them, but you find yourself acting submissive in their presence.

You are quieter than usual and you say "Everything is fine" to hide your true feelings about your deteriorating relationship.

You may even go out of your way to avoid them.



# 3. You have to keep your guard up

## You are afraid of someone

You don't want to open your mouth around someone because you fear their anger.

You fear they will overreact to something you say or do.

You fear they will ridicule or embarrass you in front of your co-workers.

You worry that they have too much power over you and could seriously damage your job and career if you get on their bad side.



# 4. You're miserable at work

When every day at work becomes an abyss of unhappiness, you should consider whether you are being bullied. Here are a few negative emotions and situations that result from frequent covert bullying:

## **You feel guilt or shame**

You feel guilty or ashamed about something you said or did, but you don't understand why.

You feel bad that you caused someone pain, though you're not sure how you hurt them.

You feel bad that you hurt the company, though you know it wasn't your fault.



# 4. You're miserable at work

## You feel unusual pressure

You feel enormous pressure to do things you don't want to.

You work overtime without understanding the reason for sacrificing.

You are anxious about your performance because of the negative consequences of any mistakes.

Your thinking is dominated by fear of criticism, failure, embarrassment or humiliation.



# 4. You're miserable at work

## Your performance drops

You're indecisive out of fear of criticism.

You feel out of control.

You realize your productivity has declined. you seem to be making more and more mistakes.

For the first time in your life, you don't feel competent at your job.

## You make choices that bring you unhappiness

You find yourself doing things contrary to your best judgment.

You ignore your instincts in order to please others or better serve the company.

You sacrifice your personal health and psychological well-being for the good of others or the company.



# 5. Your job is ruining your life

When your job begins to ruin the rest of your life, you may be dealing with a bully. Here are a few questions you can ask yourself:

## **Hate your job**

Do you dread going to work?

Do you expect to be embarrassed and humiliated?

Are you worrying about the future of your career?

Do you feel perpetually drained?

## **Think obsessively about a certain person at work**

Is there someone you hate to deal with?

Does your mind wander and rehash past interactions with them?

Do you fear confronting them?

Do you fear they may hurt your career?

Do you feel there is no way to fix the situation?

Do you have a desire for revenge?

Do you fear their anger?



# 5. Your job is ruining your life

## Signs of stress

Do you have frequent anxiety about your job?

Do you have trouble sleeping?

Do you have physical symptoms of stress?

Are you irritable and frustrated?

Are you angry, rude or silent around your family?

Have you stopped caring about everything and become emotionally numb?

Are you engaged in increasingly self-destructive behaviour?

## Fear leaving your job

Do you feel you've invested too much to walk away?

Do you feel unworthy or incapable of getting a better job?

Are you too emotionally stressed to invest energy into a job search?



# 5. Your job is ruining your life

## Consider finding a new job

If these subtle characteristics seem to match your experience, this might be a good time to start looking for a new job, especially if you've studied the various traits of a workplace bully and still can't identify one in your company.

It is also possible to feel miserable at work without being directly bullied: you may be in a toxic workplace.

## Or prepare to fight back

On the other hand, if suddenly the puzzle pieces all fit together and you have clearly identified a bully, you are ready to move forward in preparing to fight back.

**Right is Might! Kia Kaha!**





# The subtle signs of bullying

Acknowledging our source

[www.kickbully.com/subtle.html](http://www.kickbully.com/subtle.html)

