



SUBMISSION – 21/9/2012

I'm not sure that this submission completely captures the maliciousness of what happened to me. It is as difficult to write about it as it was to articulate at the time to anyone.

Everyone is entitled to their own opinions but not their own facts

Never let anyone bully you into silence:

Many victims of bullying live with a profound sense of defeat and / or shame and are afraid to break the silence for fear of what the future may hold.

They are often simultaneously afraid of doing something and afraid of doing nothing. They are compelled by their situation to choose between the lesser of two evils: the hardship of speaking up and the hardship of staying silent. There is no easy option. Neither is attractive.

Shame plays a large part in explaining why targets are often in denial or reluctant to come forward and protest the abuse. Like the shame and guilt of a rape or incest survivor, a target's denial only serves to intensify their negative self-concept.

I have only recently opened up about this to my family and friends because of the extreme emotional pain this caused me and the shame attached to being bullied.

It's taken me 12 years to break the silence as I felt that no one would believe me – this is not true, it is just another fear instilled by the abuser.

Unfortunately the colleague (my replacement) I confided in was a co-conspirator which resulted in a double betrayal.

In March 1999 I landed the job of my dreams. A well known stockbroking firm was opening a suburban Branch in the area I lived in and had advertised in the local paper for a Receptionist/Administration Manager.

I was granted an interview and I got the job!

It was perfect for me. I had over 15 years experience in the Industry and felt I could make a great contribution.

In the past I had worked with many of the Head Office's key personal. I was very passionate about playing an integral role in establishing the new branch and contributing to its success.

**The first diarised incident occurred in June 1999;**

My Boss said "For some reason Head Office seem to think you're doing a good job and want to give you an EOFY bonus"

### **These are other incidents;**

- My Boss announced one day that a girl will be coming into the office on work experience.
- I was told on most days she was coming in to leave my post at Reception and go find something else to do.
- To accommodate this girl, I was given tasks such as collecting my Boss's dry-cleaning or sent out of the office to buy gifts for social functions he and his wife had coming up.
- My Boss stated that the guys need something good to look at in the office as a diversion to work and that was the purpose of having the work experience girl there.
- I was told by my Boss that I'd have to plan any holiday leave around this work experience girls University Breaks.
- Whilst sitting at Reception one time with the work experience girl my Boss came out and asked what we were doing. I said "I'm just showing her what I do" and he said "Well that shouldn't take long then".

### **He put me down at every opportunity and it was draining.**

- My Boss told me to come into work one day in casual clothes because the work experience girl is coming in and she can sit at Reception while I clean out the back office.
- The work experience girl arrived to the office for the first time in a suit.
- Photographers turned up from the Gazette.
- My Boss told me he must have forgotten to tell me that the photographers were coming in and then told me to go upstairs and try to make myself look presentable.
- The work experience girl was photographed with my Boss in the main photo.
- I had been responsible for creating an invitation for the Office opening cocktail party. Suddenly my Boss produces one he's created and insists I send this one out but from my PC.
- One of the Director's had apparently contacted my Boss to complain about the wording on the invite. I was berated in front of my colleagues and my Boss told me not to contact the Director as he had placated the situation.

### **(He lied to a Director and everyone in the office by making out I'd written the Invitation)**

On the official day of the opening, my Boss made a disgusting comment about how the Director's would go off when they saw the work experience girl in her short skirt.

I was excluded from the Office Opening lunch by my Boss however the Managing Director's wife insisted I attend.

I wasn't feeling well on the day of the opening and I asked my Boss if I could go home for a sleep before the party that evening. He told me he had something at his house that would make me feel better and insisted we go there. I insisted on driving and when we got to his house he invited me in. I told him I'd wait in my car. He returned to the car with an asthma pump, (someone else's prescribed medication). When we arrived back to the work car park he handed me the asthma pump and said "Now I want you to take it in your mouth and suck it as hard as you can"

I looked at him in disgust and said "Excuse me!" And he said "Oh, I meant the puffer".

That evening at the cocktail party I was asked by numerous Head Office staff if I was OK, why I was excluded from the main photo in the newspaper article? Why some work experience girl was in it instead? It was clear to many that things might not be so good for me out at the branch.

You made me extremely uncomfortable in the office when you would stand next to me at Reception or directly in front of me on numerous occasions and re-arrange yourself.

I received a phone call from the Compliance Manager at the Managing Director's request as they were both concerned that perhaps I felt isolated out at the Branch and was told that if anything inappropriate was going on I should report it and that I had their support.

I said nothing about how I was being treated! I told the Compliance Manager that was fine!

My Boss told me he wanted me to include cleaning of the office as part of my role to save costs and stressed that meant toilets as well. I said "No, I'd rather pay for the cleaning myself".

In November 1999 the Compliance Manager told me that my efforts in establishing the branch had not gone unnoticed by Senior Management at Head Office and that they have received nothing but excellent feedback from my peers at the branch, Head Office staff and clients.

He then said that they all wished I was the Branch Manager. I was flattered.

In late November 1999 my Boss called me into the boardroom and told me he felt I needed a challenge and offered me an Adviser role.

I told him I had no interest in becoming an Adviser and he then said "Well put it this way, you've gone as far as you can go here!"

He completely ignored that I wasn't interested in becoming an Adviser and proceeded to tell me he would start interviewing for my replacement as he wanted to move on this quickly.

I was completely ignored and had no intention of accepting the Adviser role.

I had no intention of accepting the Advisor position as I was already in a position that utilised my experience in the industry, that benefitted the Branch and that I loved and was thriving.

I arrived one day at the Branch and you were in the Boardroom interviewing a girl. You came out and sent me in to meet with her.

She stated how much she really wanted the job, that she could learn so much from me and that we could be great friends. She started pounding the table telling me that she really needed the job and begged me to recommend her for the role.

I left the Boardroom quite disturbed by her manner.

I went upstairs to make a cup of tea when you came into the kitchen and asked me what I thought of her.

I told you I didn't think she had much broking experience and you said "She's replacing you how hard could it be?"

I expressed again that I did not want to be an Adviser and you then said that I could take some of my adminny things into the new role if that would make me happy.

I felt I was being gas lighted. My Boss just wouldn't listen to me! It was like he'd made his mind up and that was that.

Next thing the girl from the interview contacts me to thank me for recommending her. Suddenly I'm out of a job. I was appalled at this act of deceit and to top it off my Boss told Head Office that I had come to him asking to be an Adviser.

I was being bullied and pushed out but I had no idea why.

Head Office was disgusted when they'd realised what had just happened and offered to confront my Boss on my behalf. I said stupidly said "No".

The new girl had been working there less than a month when she commented that the Boss's behaviour towards me is dreadful. She stated that it is quite obvious he is insecure and feels threatened by you. I said "that's absurd".

**The new girl was very supportive and told me I should confront the Boss. I told her I hate confrontation and I'd rather not let him know the affect he is having on me.**

I was told by my Boss not to have any contact with the Compliance Manager from Head Office anymore. I explained that as I am the Compliance liaison for the Branch I report directly to him on Compliance. My Boss said "No".

I decided to resign in February 2000 but my Boss wouldn't accept it at the time, he claimed that he was aware my marriage had recently broken up (how he knew I didn't know) and that if he accepted my resignation he would look bad as a Manager.

I told him that my marriage separation is very amicable and I am fine.

I then said I get the distinct feeling I've served my purpose in establishing the Branch and now I'm being treated like an inconvenience.

He assured me that was not the case.

I tried to make the most of my role but it was difficult.

My first trade as an Adviser in my newly created position was a purchase of (Mines) shares for two women who randomly turned up at the office one day while everyone was out to lunch. I told them to come back but they insisted they wanted to deal with a female Advisor, not any sleazy old men.

The next day I'm berated in front of the whole office and threatened with being banned from advising forever because these two women had put in a complaint about how they only wanted the stock to participate in the entitlement issue. I had explained to them that the stock was trading ex and if they bought it they would not be entitled. My Boss looked pleased about their complaint yet I was in the right, he took their side, Head Office took mine.

My replacement said it was probably a set up.

I said "Why on earth would a Boss not accept my resignation, talk me out of resigning just to keep me here to treat me like dirt and set me up like that!"

As we had a few more females at the Branch I approached my Boss about procuring a Sanitary Disposal Unit for the ladies toilet to which he responded with "Is it really necessary, can't you just burn them".

A porn magazine was sent to our home in the mail addressed to our 8 year old son James. (Adults in Nappies).

My replacement said it was probably the Boss.

I was very disturbed by the accusations that all this angst was being directed at me.

Our children's pets were killed. The Police said there was evidence of poisoning which must have been going on for some time before they were finally bashed to death.

My replacement commented that it was probably my husband because he's angry that you left him. I was horrified. And I told her he's not angry at all.

In May 2000 my Boss asked me to write a proposal for the Branch. He said it would be an opportunity for me to put all my ideas down for the Branch and he told me to include detailed job descriptions for everything I do.

Suddenly he wanted the proposal urgently claiming he had a Management meeting in the City with the Managing Director and that he wanted to present it to him at that meeting.

I produced an 11 page document which I was extremely proud of. I asked my Boss following the meeting with the MD what he thought of my proposal and I was ignored the first time. I asked again and was told it doesn't concern me it was a management meeting.

My Boss told me I wouldn't be getting an EOFY bonus in 2000 and that my replacement would be getting it instead because she was doing it tough – her husband had left her.

I said must be stupid because I always thought bonuses were work related not based on marital status.

At the 2000 EOFY dinner my drink had been drugged and apparently (according to my replacement) his was done by a guy at work I had started seeing in an attempt to take advantage of me. My replacement then escorted me from the venue and into a cab.

I arrived at the office one evening to prepare for a Seminar and when my Boss arrived he looked at me with the usual look of contempt and disgust of late and said "What are you doing here? You can go there is no need for you to hang around"

Hang around? I was working out of hours because the new Receptionist didn't want to.

I had no idea why I was the target of all this bullying abuse until my Boss went overseas in 2000.

While my Boss was overseas I was acting Branch Manager in his absence and a conference call was held between my-self, a colleague who had a hefty debtor position, the Compliance Manager and one of the Director's.

The Branch's risk exposure was extremely high. When I raised it with my Boss I was either ignored or told it didn't concern me.

It was implied during that conference call that my Boss had claimed I was responsible for the debtors and I was then questioned how it got to this state.

My replacement said it was another set up.

I walked out of the office and said that's it, I should quit instead of putting up with this crap and went home to calm down.

Whilst at home I contacted the CFO to tell him I had had enough. That I had been treated appallingly, I have never said anything to anyone about it but enough is enough. He calmed me down and what he said next completely blew me away.

He said "Senior Management want to move on the decision to promote you to Branch Manager upon the Boss's return from overseas"

I was shocked!

I then said to him "Great, when he finds out about this his behaviour towards me will only escalate. Can you warn me please when you tell him?" He then said "What do you mean he's known about this since late last year." I felt sick!

My anxiety went through the roof and I was driving to work every day with a bucket next to me on the passenger seat of my car. It was less than a 5 minute drive.

I was sent the exam application that had apparently been sent to my Boss months ago to sign off on and give to me.

My Boss's deceit, manipulation and bullying over the past months were now quite obviously deliberate and calculated. And my replacement might be right about him.

To add injury to insult I found out from the Managing Director at a conference in that my Boss had presented my proposal to him as his own work.

I was frozen with shock and too scared to confront my Boss.

My replacement was well aware of my state of health and how my Boss's had affected me. She asked me if I had confided in anyone else about it and I told her I was embarrassed that I let it get this far and it's too late now. I need to make a choice whether to fight for the promotion or just leave for my health's state.

My replacement said that if I decide to leave, could I give up smoking first because she didn't think she'd be able to do that.

Alarm bells were going off everywhere!

I didn't know what to do, the whole situation was disturbing and I didn't know who to trust.

I was completely stressed out and decided to take time off in September 2000 to consult some professionals about my anxiety as a result of what was going on at work.

I was advised by my Doctor and a Counsellor to resign.

I was being fully supported in my decision to resign by my replacement who advised me just to do it don't tell anyone or they'll talk you out of it.

When I returned back after time off I told Head Office not to bother about my promotion – as I didn't think I could work at the Branch. They were determined to come out to the Branch and sort it out and I said "No, please just let me leave".

I handed my resignation letter to my Boss and he commented that he was well aware of all about my personal reasons but had no idea what I meant by professional ones.

I was further traumatised by this comment and his denial. He was not about to take any responsibility at all.

My replacement heard him say this to me and later said he'll probably use your marriage break up as the reason for your anxiety and why you resigned.

On my last day my Boss got a colleague to ask me for the exam papers because he has asked him to do it now I'm leaving. I handed the papers to my Boss and he smirked.

In a couple of weeks my anxiety had subsided and I was ready to expose the truth. I made a time to meet with my Boss.

On the evening before we were due to meet I received an abusive and threatening phone call from my replacement who claimed she would do and say anything to make sure I don't come back to work there, she told me she had been promised things from the Boss.

When I met with the Boss, the first thing he said to me was "Before you even ask, I can't let you come back to work because of my replacement and another colleague.

My replacement phoned me after the meeting to apologise for the phone call the evening before and that the Boss had put her up to it.

The other colleague phoned to ask how I went.

My Boss lied yet again!

I was told by my replacement that I was banned from the office and that my colleagues had been banned from any contact with me. Apparently my ex Boss had instructed my replacement that if I was seen anywhere near the office the Police were to be contacted.

I was totally devastated – all I did was resign from a toxic environment and heal from it but it was relentless.

I was subjected to the cruellest lies and accusations because of the rumours and comments about my personal life.

I did not know this person people were talking about (me!).

I felt powerless to defend myself.

I had thoughts of suicide.

The only person offering any support was my replacement who would come to my house and comfort me. Conveying how devastating it must be to have everyone treat you like this. She claimed she couldn't understand it yet all along she was one of the offenders. She was fuelling my anxiety. It was extremely cruel.

She turned up with an AA pamphlet stating her and my ex Boss need me to admit that I'm an alcoholic.

Approximately 12 months after I had left that workplace some documents with the Companies name all over them were strewn all over my yard.

I phoned my replacement who told me it must be the ex Boss again. I then said "He doesn't know where I live this time."

She then claimed that the office had been broken into a few days ago and then asked if it was me. I couldn't believe it and said "why would I break into the office." She then said "Oh wait a minute, you never handed the key back." I said "Yes, I did. I gave it to you." She then said "But no one knows that." This was even more disturbing.

I went to my ex Boss's home and told him what had just happened and that I was at the depths of despair and told him the truth needs to come out, this is not fair and has to stop!

He told me to get out.

I then received a note from my replacement saying she can't speak to me anymore because her Father is an alcoholic.

I phoned her to ask her what she meant by that comment considering she knew why I had developed anxiety and a drinking problem.

Her words still haunt me to this day. She said and I quote "Look, I've done a lot of damage to you professionally and personally and if you tell anyone I'll deny it all. And anyway no one's going to believe you because you've got a drinking problem now."

I asked her why she would do that to me and she told me that when I left the job I had made her look like a fool because she didn't know how to do anything. That when I left all she heard was how good I was and what a loss it was. She then said "you could of had that promotion and the relationship but I destroyed it all.

I broke at that point and have never fully recovered.



**If anyone tries to tell you how you feel or what you think or if they tell you how other's feel or what they think – it's all projection.**

**The following is taken from Tim Field's website on bullying. [www.bullyonline.org](http://www.bullyonline.org)**

### **Projection**

Bullies project their inadequacies, shortcomings, behaviours etc on to other people to avoid facing up to their inadequacy and doing something about it (learning about oneself can be painful), and to distract and divert attention away from themselves and their inadequacies. Projection is achieved through blame, criticism and allegation; once you realise this, every criticism, allegation etc that the bully makes about their target is actually an admission or revelation about themselves. This knowledge can be used to perceive the bully's own misdemeanours; for instance, when the allegations are of financial or sexual impropriety, it is likely that the bully has committed these acts; when the bully makes an allegation of abuse (such allegations tend to be vague and non-specific), it is likely to be the bully who has committed the abuse. When the bully makes allegations of, say, "cowardice" or "negative attitude" it is the bully who is a coward or has a negative attitude.

When the symptoms of psychiatric injury become apparent to others, most bullies will play the Mental Health Trap, claiming their target is "mentally ill" or "mentally unstable" or has a "mental health problem". It is more likely that this allegation is a projection of the bully's own mental health problems. If this trap is being used on you, assert "projection" as a defence against disciplinary action or as part of your legal proceedings.

**It is a key identifying feature of a person with a personality disorder or psychopathic personality that, when called to account, they will accuse the person who is unmasking them of being the one with the personality disorder or psychopathic personality from which they (the bully) suffer.**

Field believes he may be the first person to identify the profile of the serial bully. "Whilst we all recognise physical violence, we are only just learning how to recognise psychological violence", he notes. "Without blood, bruising or broken bones, the victim's testimony is often the only evidence."

Most victims don't report their abuser fearing that "no-one will believe me". Usually, no-one does.

### **Responsibility**

The serial bully appears to lack insight into his or her behaviour and seems to be oblivious to the crassness and inappropriateness thereof; however, it is more likely that the bully knows what they are doing but elects to switch off the moral and ethical considerations by which normal people are bound. If the bully knows what they are doing, they are responsible for their behaviour and thus liable for its consequences to other people. If the bully doesn't know what they are doing, they should be suspended from duty on the grounds of diminished responsibility and the provisions of the Mental Health Act should apply.

### **Excerpt from submission by psychologist Evelyn Field**

However, most targets of bullying do not believe that they deserved the bullying and are shocked when they discover what has been occurring. They are confused and then appalled

when their employer, who assured them of safety and respectful conflict resolution practices, turns against them and makes everything worse, eventually forcing them out.

Thus many employees are shocked when their basic beliefs are betrayed /sabotaged. They can't cope with the denigration of their perceptions, their usually previous good work history, the level of betrayal, from all levels by their organization, thus they break down and implode or 'curdle'.

Unlike victims of physical work injury who get nice phone calls and "get well" messages on their balloons, (Worksafe advertisements on television) victims of bullying get nothing! No-one contacts them, except perhaps the pay office, while their colleagues are told to keep away from them and are enabled to spread malicious rumours about why they left. This will humiliate and devastate them further. We know that social humiliation is experienced in the same manner as a physical pain in the brain. (Matt Liberman, Naomi Eisenberger) It interferes with an employee's survival instinct. Thus the target is further injured.

I believe that once targets lose the beliefs that are core to their being, they become changed personalities. Sadly, I am unaware of any treatment that can *put "Humpty Dumpty back together again."* Most will never return to their pre-bullying personality. In addition to helping a target/victim deal with the bullying behaviours they received and/or perceived, psychological treatment also needs to help the victim cope with many different issues, including the organizational denial of bullying, retaliation by a threatened manager, betrayal and lying in court by terrified colleagues,

**Never be bullied into silence. Never allow yourself to be made a victim.**

**Accept no one's definition of your life; define yourself – Harvey Fierstein**