

Busting the Bully, by Rebecca B.W. Anderson

We have all had to deal with bullies in our lives. Sometimes they appear at work or school and even worse, at home. Your boss could be a bully. Or, you could be married to a bully. How do you resolve anything with a bully? Tricks and tools for busting the bully come from understanding him/her from the inside out. The bully operates from a different paradigm than most people. Their world is one of scarcity, not abundance; of fear, not security; and of suspicion, not trust. Win/lose is the operative paradigm, not win/win. The bully sees threats everywhere. It is as if they live in a war zone even though no one else wants to fight. It is impossible to change their minds on this, so part of the engagement with a bully has to be the powerful fight. Not disrespectful, not abusive, but powerful. Bullies respond to power and will make concessions to powerful opponents. Stand strong and don't be too nice. Find leverage to trigger fear in the bully because bullies often back off or compromise when fearful.

Bullies are like army tanks. They fire out missiles and let nothing in. That means they don't listen, they don't negotiate, they attack, they blame, they diminish, they don't take responsibility for their actions, and they fire out their one-sided, black and white view of things and call it Reality. Again, it is war for the bullies. In war, people don't talk about gray areas and compromise. So stick to **your** own blacks and whites - your most powerful facts and leverage points and keep it simple and strong. Stay away from the gray.

In this distorted game of "war", it is essential to always make bullies *feel* like they are winning even when they are losing. Never let them *feel* like their opponent is getting any true advantage. One must swallow a lot of ego to prevail over bullies and cleverly disguise win/win outcomes as win/lose outcomes. Never force bullies to walk away empty handed - let them walk over the finish line with something . . . anything . . . so their egos aren't shattered. Framing and posturing are key.

On the bright side, bullies are real people who crave connection and don't have much because they are so difficult. Connection is leverage so while fighting the fight, always be respectful and always try to find some point of connection. Then build it. Build it every day, every way you can. Talk about the connective point every time you talk to the bully. In the end, most bullies can't help but cave to connection, allowing the paradigm to soften and some peace to enter the warzone.



Rebecca B.W. Anderson is an attorney at Jones Gledhill Fuhrman Gourley, P.A., practicing in the areas of Real Estate, Business and Dispute Resolution and handles complex disputes, either as a mediator or as a lawyer representing one party to a negotiated resolution. Rebecca has been practicing law for over 25 years, is AV Preeminent Rated by Martindale Hubbell, was voted a “Top Rated Lawyer” by Martindale Hubbell in the areas of Dispute Resolution and Commercial Real Estate and is included in the Best Lawyers in America in 2016. She gives seminars on “Busting the Bully”, “The Joy of Conflict” and other dispute resolution topics to a variety of audiences.