

## Toxic Managers Chapters 17-20

### Chapter 17

- There are three central characteristics of the authoritarian personality style:
  - Strong adherence to social convention.
  - Submission to whomever they see as legitimate authority.
  - Tendency to act aggressively, particularly when it is sanctioned by authority figures.
- Fear of chaos and criticism are the demons that underlie and drive the behavior of authoritarian managers.
- They want to believe that the answers are simple and clear, and that there is one right way.
- Everyone has a proper role to play in life, including a stereotypic gender role.
- Their eagerness to submit to authority figures sets them apart from compulsive managers.
- A particularly interesting aspect of authoritarian managers is that they may not recognize the same authority that you do.
  - They may decide that their boss is in control, or that the technical expert should have final say, or that the outside consultant should have final say.
- Authoritarian managers are often irritable and aggressive.
- Their frustration and stress also builds because of their failure to live up to their own expectations.
- It is generally best to play the game.
  - Show them some deference and do your job competently, and they are likely to treat you well.
  - Above all, do not go around them or over their heads.
- Rigid, authoritarian bosses tend to be harsh, but they are not sadistic.
- The most crucial issue is working on your own reaction. It is essential to avoid letting them destroy your morale, initiative, and creativity.
- In particular, they need to allow those under them more freedom in decision making. They also need to not vent anger toward those under them.
- Providing concrete suggestions for doing things differently will help.

### Chapter 18

- Dictatorial managers are the least problematic of the rigid managers.
  - Their behavior is limited to wanting to make all key decisions themselves.
  - When people do not participate in decision making they are more likely both to fail to whole heartedly support decisions and to succumb to stress and burn-out.
  - This interferes with team members becoming committed to and excited about projects.
  - Instead, oppositional and passive-aggressive behavior become likely.
- After expressing an understanding of why they have centralized decision making, you can talk about the benefits of wider participation.
- They seek relatively little input from others.

- To review:
  - **narcissistic** managers want things done their way because they know what is best
  - **compulsive** managers want things done their way because they are uncomfortable with new ways
  - **authoritarian** managers want things to be done their boss's way
  - **dictatorial** managers want a good decision to be made quickly, since that is most efficient.

### Chapter 19

- Oppositional coworkers are contentious.
  - They argue with you about anything and everything.
  - It is not because they dislike you; it is the only way they know how to interact.
- To protect their self-esteem they deny their responsibility for problems and blame others whenever possible.
- The feeling that they are always being dominated leads to a reservoir of anger.
- This leads to chronic irritability.
  - They can lose their temper relatively easily.
  - Those with less self-control and more anger will deliberately annoy others and be resentful, spiteful, and vindictive.
- Managers with oppositional personality traits, if challenged by subordinates, become indignant.
  - If this happens you need to quickly move into a more deferential posture.
- Sidestepping arguments is the best way to conserve your energy and your sanity.
- Nevertheless, a good therapist is likely to be able to help them achieve better control of their feelings and behavior in a reasonable period of time.

### Chapter 20

- The term *passive-aggressive* refers to behavior that interferes with someone else's goals without directly opposing them.
  - Negativism and procrastination are the key weapons in the passive-aggressive individual's arsenal.
- Passive-aggressive individuals are generally not aware that their behavior is a problem. Rather, they see you as the problem.
- They are also high-maintenance and draining.
- They tend to complain about being unappreciated or misunderstood, often envy others, and complain about their personal misfortunes.
- They often become depressed, and when depressed, their behavior is likely to be at its worst.
- How to deal:
  - Instead, it may help to casually toss out a statement explaining why it is so important to you that something is taken care of.
  - Noting that you appreciate how they are overloaded with work and offering to help them either with this or another task to lighten their burden often helps.
- When you do work or finish a report for a passive-aggressive manager, make sure you date it and, using any excuse you can, let others know it is done.
- Coworkers who are passive-aggressive will also cause you pain.
  - It is best to keep them at a gentle distance.
- How to deal with a passive-aggressive subordinate:

- You should find those areas of their behavior that are most problematic for getting the job done and focus attention on ameliorating them.
- Make a silent note to yourself of what they are doing that is most problematic.
- Are they negativistic on ideas? Do they drag their feet? Do they “yes” you to death and then not deliver?
- Make these behaviors a major part of their assessments, and give them continual feedback when you feel they are engaging in negativistic and oppositional behavior.
- You can do this by proactively seeking their opinion and input on things. If you get their buy-in, they are less likely to feel put upon and to therefore be oppositional.
- Document the problems in their work products so that if the time comes, you will be able to fire them without excessive difficulty.
- Managers with passive-aggressive traits, however, are another matter. They often need extensive coaching and therapy for their behavior to improve and remain better.
- It is very rare for passive-aggressive managers to rise in organizations unless they have some very unusual connections or talents.
  - Their negativism and procrastination generally prevent them from succeeding.