

Lies in Truth and Truth in Lies: An In-depth Study of a Workplace Bullying Scenario

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*A truth that's told with bad intent
Beats all the lies you can invent.
It is right it should be so;
Man was made for Joy and Woe;
And when this we rightly know,
Thro' the World we safely go,
Joy and woe are woven fine,
A clothing for the soul divine.*

William Blake (1757 –1827) from the *Auguries of Innocence*

Victims of bullying tell of their tales of woe. They tell how they have lost the joy they once experienced in their work. They complain of feeling tired, losing concentration, becoming angry and depressed. They suffer from low levels of self-esteem and become socially isolated. They tell of how they have been the targets of persistent persecution; a persecution which takes the form of overt behavior such as verbal and physical abuse, constant criticism and nitpicking and covert behavior such as being set up to fail by denying information and exclusion from meetings.

Bullying scenarios are complex and confusing not just for the victims but also for the audience, those who are aware of what is happening, and for those trying to mediate in the conflict. Reconciling the differing viewpoints in order to find a resolution is challenging. The story of the victim and the story of the bully often do not tally. It is difficult to make sense of what is happening; the behavior and the responses often seem irrational. Bullies

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