Chapter 4
Narcissistic and Sociopathic Leadership and the World of Higher Education: A Place for Mentoring, Not Mobbing

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ABSTRACT

This chapter was designed to explore mobbing and bullying within higher education. This chapter per the researchers revealed the theoretical framework, the schema of people making versus bullying and mobbing, as well as differentiating between bullying and mobbing. Moreover, an array of examples of types of dark leadership and toxicity was provided. Furthermore, the researchers felt it was imperative to include the organizational culture applied to bullying and mobbing, in addition to the emphasis of counterproductive behavior. Also, the physiological and psychological impact on individuals under that leadership was provided as well as bullying and mobbing case studies. Preventative measures of bullying and mobbing within all levels was discussed and included a solution such as the TSTL survey created by Dr. David B. Ross. Lastly, a conclusion was provided.

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INTRODUCTION

Sticks and stones may break our bones, but words will never hurt us. This is a very well-known phrase that our parents and teachers would tell us when our classmates attempted to or succeeded at hurting us by means of bullying. From young, we were taught to ignore the venom that spewed from individuals whose sole objective was to harm us in any way, shape, or form. We all assumed that this form of misbehavior would end sometime in elementary or even high school, but who would ever imagine that this would continue to follow us as adults, and in the work-field, more specifically, the higher education field.

Many individuals write fables and comedy about bullying, mobbing, inflicting pain, and hurting people physically and emotionally. There must be a truth to this, as there is always a lesson to be learned with each story told. In comedy, we laugh at it to take our minds off of it, as it is a way of getting away from reality. Dating back to Plato’s The Republic, it was known to be acceptable to laugh at others, in order to feel superior (Guardian News, 2007). More specifically, Plato felt that when individuals laughed at others’ misfortunes, it was inappropriate. As time progressed toward the Middle Ages, individuals ridiculed those who were physically impaired, such as dwarfism, and a person who suffered from Kyphosis (i.e., roundback, a hunchback). This form of ridiculing continued into the Victorian Era where individuals laughed at those who were mentally ill and who were committed to psychiatric institutions (Guardian News, 2007). A certain Aesop fable, for example, can prove this point, such as the frog and the scorpion (Aesop’s Fable, 2011). For instance, the scorpion needed to get to the other side of the river; however, he could not swim. The scorpion then befriended the frog, who did not trust the scorpion. After pleading with the frog for a long period, the frog finally gave in and agreed to take the scorpion to the other side with the understanding not to sting and kill the frog. Once the scorpion and frog arrived at the other side of the river, the scorpion stung the frog and killed him. The moral of the fable is to be careful of whom you trust as they could sting you and/or bully you into doing them a favor. This is the same in the workplace, where people will promise you one thing and bully you the next; this is frequent behavior as the workplace is full of competition and jealousy and will undercut you to seek favor (Aesop’s Fable, 2011).

Although, it must be stressed that bullying and mobbing do not solely occur within the higher education field (Matteson, 2002; Sasso, 2017). A study conducted by Sasso (2017) illustrated narcissistic leadership in all fields, whereas a study conducted by Matteson (2002) focused on mobbing and bullying within the federal government.
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