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Musings

#81: Dealing with Bullies

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Unfortunately, we are increasingly a society of bullies. Rather than looking for discourse and discussion, we are often confronted with orders and demands. On the business side, you undoubtedly will come across bullies in your organization or in your market. It is difficult for bullies to succeed in the long run because they are transactional in nature. They don't build good relationships as they force their position on others. Still, you have to work with them and manage the situation.

Bullies can have some success because so many individuals are conflict averse. Too many people just fold up and get bullied in things like negotiations. A hard-nose bully will just not move, even after rational and thoughtful push back. Don't give in and capitulate! You can't let them have their way or it reinforces the approach for the next time.

Be patient. You can't let a bully wear you down. Grind it out like when you were trying to get your kid potty-trained. It can be an endurance test.

It is also helpful to "punch back" selectively. You always hear about "hitting the bully right in the nose." Look for opportunities to go right back at them. It could be on a certain point or filing a counter lawsuit (bullies like to sue). Jeb Bush tried to take the elegant, high road when Trump bullied him during the last primary campaign. He needed to punch back.

Bullies often are Fonzie's who will never say they were wrong. Try getting them to delegate to someone else if you have to get a deal done. We were buying a business once and one co-owner kept the other co-owner out of the entire negotiation. I guess he was kind of a bully and she knew a deal would never get done with him in the details. We got a deal done with the non-bully co-owner and built a great business.

Back to work. Stay socially distant. No handshakes. Can't go backwards.

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Second Thoughts

Recently, I wrote about the potential for a cybersecurity pandemic. Example in higher ed as "pirates" grab personal info and demand payment: [colleges-face-evolving-cyber-extortion-threat](#)

Police unions are part of the problem just like teachers' unions. You have to allow some separation of good performers from bad performers. WSJ editorial [the-problem-with-police-unions](#)