

PREVIEW AND THE FIRST CHAPTER OF

Going For The Green:

*Play Smart, Work Smart Principles
Of Managing Self On and Beyond The Front
Nine*

*By
William I. Gorden
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***Going For The Green: Play Smart, Work Smart Principles
Of Managing Self On and Beyond The Front Nine***

- 1. The Big Cs --Avoiding The Rough Of Verbal Abuse and Hazards Of Bullying**
- 2. Fore Warning--Avoiding the Bunker Of Violence**
- 3. Amiability--Avoiding the Rough Of Gossip, Hazards Of Rumors and Traps of Righteousness**
- 4. Rules--Avoiding The Rough Of Language Blunders, Slices And Hooks Of Misunderstanding**
- 5. Rules—Avoiding the Rough of Noise, Bunkers of Crowding and Traps of Odor**
- 6. Judgment--Avoiding The Rough Of Sexual Harassment And Trap Of Sex On The Mind**
- 7. Honor--Avoiding The Rough Of Fear And Traps of Cover Up**
- 8. Drivers--Avoiding The Rough Of Bad Bossing And The Lake of Mediocrity**
- 9. Perspective--Avoiding The Rough Of Perfectionism And Trap Of All Work And No Play**

Introduction

I have a pillow that has a picture on it of a golf green with a sand trap and trees nearby and in bold type the words "I'd Rather Be Golfing." Those of us, who passionately golf at every opportunity, cannot keep from thinking about and planning for tee time even while our heads are on a pillow or we are at work. However, while going for the greens, only on rare occasions do we allow our minds to think about the jobs that we have left behind.

Golf is something we choose to do. It is for fun and for most of us also is a lesson in humility. Work for many is something we have to do in a place we have to be. Is it possible that there are workplaces where people want to be rather than have to be--where workers do not miss having fun? Is it possible to carry back to the workplace some of what we learn at golf and some of the fun we find there?

Going For The Green applies golf's rules, etiquette, character, effort, expertise, and strategies employed in course management to work and career management.

Each of nine chapters focuses on an attitude and behavior essential to smart play and to smart working with others, and each also describes the rough and hazards that often frustrate expression of that attitude and behavior. Chapters are packed with examples of real people who were or are in rough and hazardous situations within the workplace. None are fictitious. The savvy presented derived from the lessons of golf is coupled with that learned from workplace coaches, trainers, managers and the bossed. Consequently, the overarching theme of *Going For The Green* is learning--learning from those who have been there. Readers targeted include managers, supervisors, and those who are beginning their careers.

In *Catchfire* (1998, Ballantine Books), Peter McLaughlin proposes Step 1 to top performance in business is "Mastering Your Mind." He argues that business, like golf, hinges on the ability to calmly focus. Unlike *Catchfire*, *Going For The Green* provides dozens of the examples of the rough and hazards employees encounter and of ways to avoid them and manage oneself and others at work. Other than Peter McLaughlin's book, I know of no other that likens golfing principles to work. The best selling *Fish! Tales* by Stephen Lundin, John Christensen and Harry Paul makes the case that work can be joyful. The

event that spurred, perhaps more correctly, hooked them on the title for their book, was seeing the exhilaration with which the fishmongers put fish in the hands of customers in the World Famous Pike Place Fish market in downtown Seattle. The workers there take orders with delight and then toss the fish chosen to a co-worker to wrap them. The foremost principle, they propose, about this place where fishmongers cause crowds to cheer their work is:

PLAY—Work made fun gets done, especially when we choose to do serious tasks in a lighthearted, spontaneous way. Play is not just an activity; it's a state of mind that brings new energy to the tasks at hand and sparks creative solutions.

With that same playful, yet serious, frame of mind, I ask what might golf teach us about managing self and others at work? And what are the rough spots, hazards, and traps that slow our progress and enjoyment going for the green at work? Ever think of your job that way? Let's do. What might we learn from others who have been in the rough and have had to get out of the traps at work? What qualities of character contribute to career success can be derived from the game of golf? What principles, rules, and lessons from golf might apply beyond the front nine to the workplace?

I have studied quality improvement in workplaces from coast to coast. My doctor's degree is in communication and my specialization is the workplace. I have conducted dozens of seminars in workplace communication and spent many months in around-the-clock company-wide team building. For the past decade on Internet site *Ask The Workplace Doctors* that I founded, we have advised hundreds of individuals who have submitted questions about how to make their jobs less frustrating and more productive.

Bill Gorden, Professor of Organizational Communication and Consultant re. workplace communication, teambuilding and quality improvement. He is founder and senior consultant to *Ask The Workplace Doctors*. Personal email gorden@kent.edu

“If you watch it, it’s fun. If you play it, it’s recreation. If you work at it, it’s golf.”—Bob Hope¹

“As of tomorrow, employees will only be able to access the building using individual security cards. Pictures will be taken next Wednesday and employees will receive their cards in two weeks.”—Fred Dales at Microsoft Corp in Redmond, WA.²

CHAPTER ONE

THE BIG Cs—Avoiding The Rough Of Verbal Abuse and Hazard of Bullying

In 2003, when he drove off the first tee at the Royal St. George Course in Scotland, he was No. 396 in the world ranking and a 500-1 long, long shot with the British bookies. On the final green he closed with a 2-under 69, leaving him the only player to break par at 283, and was declared winner of the toughest and most famous of tournaments. Not Tiger Woods, whose first drive landed in the long grasses and who bogeyed his last two holes. Not the two runners-up, Thomas Bjorn, who took three shots to escape a pot bunker, coming in second to tie with Vijay Singh. The one to have his name inscribed on the old burnished, claret jug along side the great names—Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Ben Hogan, Bobby Jones—was Ben Curtis.

When asked if he ever dreamed he could win a major like the British Open, Curtis declared that every player entered, if he played well, had a good chance at winning. To the question: what if you have never played the course before and never won a major? He responded, “It’s a matter of having confidence in your own game, playing smart, and trusting . . . You know everyone is playing the same course you are. If you keep level-headed and focused on what you’re trying to do, it shouldn’t matter.”³

Ben grew up in Ostrander, Ohio, where he started playing golf at the age of three. His house was only 50 yards from the practice putting green of the Millcreek Golf Course, built by his grandfather. Ben was a star on coach Herbie Page’s golf team at Kent State University, where for 25 years I have worked as a professor specializing in workplace communication. Shortly after winning the British open, he and his bride moved into a new house in the Pebblehurst subdivision across from Fox Den Golf, the course that I play most frequently.

This marginal connection to a professional golf and my joining the thousands who have walked along side players competing in the World Golf Championships-NEC Invitational at the Firestone course in nearby Akron are the closest I will ever get to big time golf. Yet I like the game, and because of my longtime career as a professor and consultant of workplace communication, I can see how the game of golf has unique rules and lessons that can benefit those of us who work when we would like to be golfing.

Soccer, football, volleyball, basketball and hockey are played, perhaps it is more accurate to say *are fought*, between two teams on a court or field. Often players on one side hurl sharp and demeaning words and objects, such as a puck or ball, at opponents, and their bodies crash against one another. They are combative and belligerent games. Golf is different. Golf courses are spacious and convey a pastoral feeling. Golfers do not confront opponents preventing

them from reaching a goal and striving to knock them or their balls down. Golf by its very nature is a gentle sport. Golf links do not bring to mind verbal abuse and physical intimidation, as do soccer or football stadiums, basketball arenas, or hockey rinks.

When years ago, I first took up the game, I had an old set of clubs a friend sold me for a few dollars, and I played with them no more than a dozen times. Now recently that occasional pain had helped me decide it would be better for my knees to do more walking than jogging, I decided to take up golf semi-seriously. So I signed up for what was billed as Nine Lessons for the Front Nine taught by the club pro, Jason Jake Johnson. Jason is of medium height, a wiry-bodied fellow with a ruddy complexion weathered by too much time in the sun. During my first lesson, he asked, “What do you do for a living?”

I jokingly told him, “I work to play golf.”

“No, what do you really do?”

I told him, “I’m a professor of organizational communication.”

Again he asked, “What do you really do?”

I explained, “I teach students about what’s involved in listening to and talking with co-workers and their bosses. Many of them are headed for business careers. Also I consult and train managers and those they manage in team building and quality improvement.”

Jason then asked, as he launched a drive straight for the 300 marker, “What are the most frequent problems about the way employees communicate?”

It was then that I told him about our Internet site *Ask the Workplace Doctors* and how over this past decade we have had thousands of visitors to our site. Managers send us questions about problems with employees and employees send questions about their bosses and co-workers. The biggest complaint we get from employees is verbal abuse.”

“What’s that, Doc? Cussing at stupidity?”

“Yeah, for some that may be what prompts hostile remarks or cussing by a co-worker of a co-worker, or a boss cursing a subordinate, or a subordinate badmouthing a boss.”

Jason said, “That’s hard to believe; maybe because such behavior is rare on the golf course. Golfers may swear at themselves or the ball or a club. Or at a group ahead that is playing too slowly, or at someone behind who hits into them, but almost never face to face at another player.”

So it was that I told him that all who work when they would rather be golfing do not have so pleasant of working conditions, as does he. I reached for my bag and looked at the clubs I had shined up.

“Not yet, Doctor” he said. “There will be plenty of time to focus on the mechanics. My nine lessons are really nine principles that will make both play more effective and satisfying. Today we’ll concentrate only on the Big Cs of golf.”

“The Big Cs?”

Jason didn’t answer. And that was about all that was said between us about verbal abuse that day. I didn’t unload on Jason the pile of information I had about verbal abuse. He wouldn’t be interested in all I knew about the subject. Nor did I tell him that we got 5,000 hits on our Internet site the day after an article titled “Working With A Jerk” appeared in *Washington Post* that described our advice about coping with verbal abuse. If he had asked, I could have answered the question: Are our times crude and rude? But I didn’t want to waste my time by lecturing Jason and distracting him from golf instruction.

Jason told me that because golf balls frequently go astray the four-letter word *g o l f* had a kinship with another much used four-letter word. He shared with me the story from Australia that made his point. At the annual awards night in the Jamberoo Golf Club, he said, they give a prize for *most interesting or amusing incident by a member on a course during the year*:

The winner was Lyn Deegan, who was playing in a ladies’ competition at Bowral Golf Club, when she couldn’t help but notice that one of her playing partners was becoming so impatient with anything less than a perfect shot that she kept muttering loudly, “F’ it!” ... “F’ it!” By the third hole this was becoming too much for Lyn, who suggested to her partner that if it would make her feel better she should let it all out, and scream out just once “F--- it!” - as in using all four letters of the “F” word. Came the icy reply: “My dear, I was saying: Effort, effort!”⁴

Jason, added, “We each have a choice--to cuss or not to cuss when things go badly. And too frequently, those who cuss also shout angrily or yelp in pain, or as they would euphemistically put it, they *raise their voices*. Allowing tempers to flare can be a habit that is not easily broken even in the expanses of a golf course.”

However, he said that those who let fly with obscenities usually are directing them toward themselves and not at others on the course. Before I met Jason at the driving range, it had only taken half a bucket of balls for me to prove the ease with which a golf shot can go awry and how frustration can call forth cursing, not unlike the ease in which something can go wrong at work often brings out the worst in us. Years ago, Horace Hutchinson quipped, “If profanity had an influence on the flight of the ball, the game would be played far better than it is.”

President George H. W. Bush expressed this same frustration in a slightly more dignified manner, “The problem with golf is I have to deal with a humiliation factor.” And golfer Ben Crenshaw also pointed to the ego factor, “The game embarrasses you until you feel inadequate.”⁵

Jason summed up his mini-lecture with, “Language is a matter of choice, habit, and attitude.”

“You would make a good communication prof,” I said. His thoughts brought to mind the kind of choices, habits, and attitudes that propel verbal abuse in the workplace. When I got back to the office, I started to write what became the rest of this chapter.

Verbal Abuse. Verbal and nonverbal abuse is expressed in various ways: squelching, putting down, correcting, criticizing, belittling, trivializing, snubbing, sneering at, cursing, yelling, and raging. Verbal venom is accompanied by body fight signals. Just as animals act and react with growls and fangs, so do humans signal fight and flight. Some individuals bark; some bark back; and some turn tail.

The workplace does not strictly follow the military *don't talk back* rule. Consequently, verbal abuse tends to escalate in a tit for tat destructive spiral. By mirroring an abuser, those who muster up the courage to talk back are saying, “I won't be controlled.” The *best places to work for* have abandoned the military model in favor of civility regardless of rank.

Verbal abuse often is expressed with swearing. Women in one plant complained about their boss, an Ex-Navy Chief, used of the “F” word to their faces and called them “bitches” behind their backs. They took their complains to management, but the foul, demeaning language did not stop.

A woman at a different workplace reported a co-worker frequently exploding, “What the F*^\$ is he doing?” or “He's a lazy F*^\$#r.” A customer with whom she was speaking on the phone overheard this cursing. A slightly different twist is that described by a male guard in a prison who was heard using profanity by a female guard. The female guard reported this to the warden, and the warden reprimanded him. These examples illustrate how tough talk, expressed in taboo language, can be employed to dominate others.

The f-word is common workplace parlance of many individuals. Even those in high office, such as tapes of President Nixon illustrate, spice their conversations with such. You, like I, probably grew up being taught that words like that are to be avoided, especially in public. The truth is that cusswords themselves really do not hurt anyone. Rather it is the attitude of insult expressed in profane abuse that hurts.

This said does not ignore the fact that some employees are offended by profanity and some customers might take their business away from where such language is present. Profanity, when it is vented to and about co-workers and bosses, is a matter that should be on the agenda of a staff meeting. Work groups rarely talk about the way they talk to and about each other or about the rules of communication. That's a mistake.

Those who are victims of verbal abuse have a choice. They can swallow hard or they can speak up, saying, "I work better when I am not yelled at. Just tell me what is bothering you and maybe it can be corrected." That is a start to stopping abuse, but not sufficient.

Incivility Costs. I could have told Jason what two professors, Christine Pearson and Christine Porath, in the Marshall School of Business of the University of Southern California, had learned about verbal abuse. After conducting interviews, surveys, focus groups, and experiments with more than 2,400 people in the United States and Canada over an eight-year period, they concluded:

- 20-50% say they are victims of incivility on a weekly basis.
- 80% of employees say they get no respect at work.
- 60% say their situation is getting worse.
- 1 in 8 employees, who experience rudeness, quit.
- Costs for turnover average \$50,000 per employee.
- Fortune 1000 executives spend 13% of their time dealing with worker disputes.
- Does incivility decrease concentration? Yes.
- Does incivility decrease performance? Yes.
- Managers should be kinder and gentler? Yes. ⁶

I could have also told Jason about a program to raise awareness of civility, respect, and engagement of employees who are working in the Veteran hospitals across the nation. Studies by the VA pinpoint *civility* as a benchmark measure of employee satisfaction and as a predictor of intent to stay with or leave the VA. Surveys of some 27,000 employees by VA researchers found that a *huge and statistically significant* difference between work groups that were civil as compared to those that were lacking civility. Items used to measure civility or lack of it within a work group were:

People treat each other with respect.

A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists.

Disputes or conflicts are resolved fairly.

The people I work with take a personal interest in me.⁷

Jason's said the most fundamental first lesson of golf is not how to strike the ball. Rather he said it is learning how to behave on the course. I decided to type into this chapter his two-sentence lecture: "You asked, what were the Big Cs. They are *consideration* and *courtesy*. Golf is probably the best mannered of all sports. Its ground rules are based on the definition of civility—good manners, politeness, courtesy, consideration, and kind attention." To re-enforce this, he gave me a copy of the introduction to the rules. That night I read how the United States Golf Association stresses the overriding principle of golf is "consideration should be shown to others on the course at all times:" In a prelude to its rules, the USGA states:

Unlike many sports, golf is played, for the most part, without the supervision of a referee or umpire. The game relies on the integrity of the individual to show consideration for other players and to abide by the Rules. All players should conduct themselves in a disciplined manner, demonstrating courtesy and sportsmanship at all times, irrespective of how competitive they may be. This is the spirit of the game of golf.⁸

That was my introduction to golf's Big Cs—***Consideration and Courtesy***. And these two Big Cs are why, above all other sports, golf is one in which civility is foremost. Beginning with the first tee, consideration and courtesy are expected, and in similar fashion, in the workplace, they should be expected beginning with the first day of employment. It is because I like golf that this thought has come to my mind again and again: The workplace can learn a lot from golf.

I asked myself if the principle of consideration and courtesy was as clearly stated in the workplaces of this country? I found that, as is the case with the USGA rulebook, most workplace handbooks and collective bargaining agreements set forth the principle of civility. But some statements are hidden deep within a handbook rather than put up front and little is stated about what it means to be considerate and courteous to co-workers. For example in the *Master Agreement between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Federation of Government Employees Master Agreement between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Federation of Government Employees*, midway within it, I found such phrases as "In an atmosphere of respect, all employees shall be treated fairly" and "Employees, individually and collectively, have the right to expect, and to pursue, conditions of employment which promote and sustain human dignity and self-respect."⁹

Similar language is found in handbooks of even small companies. An excerpt from Harvest Valley Bakery Handbook lists as cause for discipline or termination: threats, willful disrespect, or use of abusive language toward others.

Southwest Airlines is more up front with its mission statement:

Above all, employees will be provided the same concern, respect, and caring attitude within the organization that they are expected to share externally with every Southwest Customer.

AT&T's value statement is succinct:

We treat each other with respect and dignity.¹⁰

A workplace that makes verbal abuse and bullying unwelcome has taken a big step toward a civil work environment. Decisive statements, when backed up with action, are essential to foster a healthy work environment. How workers communicate with each other, with suppliers, and customers affects how jobs get done.

I saw that in the USGA Rules, Golf Etiquette comes first before any of its many rules. Why should golf etiquette come first? Probably because golf etiquette implies that some players have not held anger within and on rare occasions have vented it to others, and that kind of behavior is out of bounds. Policy making usually follows unwanted behavior. Even in golf, this well-mannered sport, there was and is a need for statements of etiquette. One of Bill Purdin's Ten Commandments of Golf Etiquette addresses temperament:

Golf is a game of days, next shots, and handicaps. You are never out of it until you get mad, become belligerent; start throwing things, in other words, until you give up. Never blame other golfers for your bad play out loud or even quietly to yourself, if you want to play well. Never blame another player for enforcing and championing the rules of golf. Don't explain why your shot was bad, or good, and never yell out or whine after hitting a bad shot. Don't be so competitive that you forget that golf is a game played competitively for enjoyment. Play like a gentleman (and gentlewoman) in demeanor and attitude, because, in golf it is not what happens to you, it's your attitude towards it that determines the ultimate outcome.¹¹

If Purdin's advice were applied to the workplace, these simple guidelines would be spelled out as:

- Work is a game of days, next efforts, and handicaps.
- You are never out of it until you get mad, become belligerent; start throwing things, in other words, until you give up.
- Never blame another guy or gal for your bad mistakes out loud or even quietly to yourself, if you want to work well.
- Never blame another player for enforcing and championing the rules of the company or organization.

- Don't explain why your work was bad, or good, and never yell out or whine after making a bad mistake.
- Don't be so competitive that you forget that work should also be for enjoyment.
- Be gentle in demeanor because, at work it is not what happens to you, it's your attitude towards your job and others that determines the ultimate outcome.¹²

My initial lesson on the driving range was over. Applying the lesson of the Big Cs would be something to reflect on until my next my session with Jason.

Bullying. A golf lesson is no place to talk about what I thought about bullying—that bullies bully because it works for them. The bullied back off. They comply and conform. I had spared Jason the many queries sent our site, *The Workplace Doctors*, by the bullied. One that came to mind was by an employee, who works in a museum that has 500 employees, in what one would think was a tranquil environment. He described the second in command associate director. Notice how this man says that his co-workers avoid the bully:

She is a hothead who leads through intimidation. She cusses like a sailor and has been getting away with this style for many years. The director (her boss) turns a deaf ear to her ways as long as she meets the bottom line. This woman is not my boss, but is a micromanager and is my boss' boss.

Recently, she tried to enter our office through a side door that was locked. When she couldn't turn the handle, she slammed the door with her fist until I opened it, and then she got in my face (3 inches away) and told me to GO TO HELL! I just happened to be in her line of fire when she exploded. I had nothing to do with the door being locked. There are no directives explaining that the door should remain locked or not. She's just a bit unbalanced. Anything can set her off. There were a number of witnesses to this event, but no one ever wants to say anything for fear of getting on her bad side and then suffering the consequences.¹³

Many workers complain about bullying, but often they choose to complain at home or to co-workers rather than to confront the bully. It is not infrequent to hear someone say, "My boss plays favorites and hardly does any work. She expects me to do most of the work. She's moody. Her way is the only way and she loves to flaunt her authority." Bullies make pettiness look like that is the way business gets done.

I'm Caged In With A Hostile Co-Worker. Our *Ask the Workplace Doctors site* received an extended account by Ms. X, who works with as a dispatcher in a trucking company:

On Friday, I had finished going through the dispatch cards, tagging scheduled deliveries onto the computer and printing out any documents related to them. I rubber banded the cards and

placed them on the back of my desk. I was on the phone with a salesman, and my co-worker had been hovering around my desk, moving things and using it to write on. I looked to the edge of the desk where she had been and saw dispatch cards strewn all over, I looked to where I had placed the cards I had gone through, and they were gone. She had taken them and added others from the board that I hadn't gone over yet. I turned around and asked her if she had "torn these apart" and she said she "had to".

I turned back to my desk and muttered that I had to go through them again. She yelled at me, saying that I was talking about her. I said no, and so ensued a verbal exchange. I lost control and used profanity at her. She didn't seem upset about that; she uses it all the time. She began to belittle me by telling me to turn around at my desk, to leave and close the door. I got up to leave, and she continued to yell at me about leaving, I retorted that when she signs my check, she can tell me what to do. My supervisor was in a meeting with the president, so I told our general manager about this incident, and I admitted I had used profanity. I was so upset I was shaking. I don't know what will happen on Monday, but if I were my supervisor, I'd probably fire us both. I don't know if he'll do something like this. We are a small office and are presently very short-handed. I guess I fell for the bait she set. I felt and still feel badly about what happened. I could've handled it differently. I lost control.

Ms. X ended her story of abuse with the question: How do I handle Monday? The words of another employee, who took it as long as she could and then sent out resumes in search of different place to work, illustrate the tactics a bully employs:

I work for a bully. He's always yelling and threatening. Lately, he has directed his threats to me. Just yesterday he called me into his office and ranted, raved and cursed me – telling me, "You've lost it. You're a rouge employee. I'm the boss, Conform or you're fired." He pounded the desk and with tight lips said, "I eat people like you and spits them out." All I am trying to do is my job. Whenever anything goes awry, he blames me and starts his tantrums. This last one was so bad co-workers heard it through the walls and came up to me to make sure I was ok. I am a diabetic and he knows this. I never know what kind of mood he will be in, and my sugar and blood pressure are skyrocketing. Other than him, I love my job, but his constant threats and berating are taking their toll.

Bullying Is More Than Rudeness. An individual employed in health care described how she feels when a doctors yells at her: "It just feels like it doesn't matter who is right or wrong; it is about who can scream the loudest. I try my hardest to stay in computer mode, but to everyone around, it looks like I am the one that was wrong because I am being yelled at." In her setting, the doctor didn't know the rules of civility, didn't follow the rules, and avoided accountability.

Bullying in the workplace is more than simply rude or inconsiderate behavior. It can adversely impact a victim's emotional and physical health, working relationships and economic and job security. Bullying also undermines an employer's legitimate business interests and negatively impacts productivity. An atmosphere of abuse, distress, and mistrust is two to three times more likely to occur than illegal discrimination such as sexual, racial or age-related harassment.

Bully bosses manipulate assignments and deadlines so that subordinates are impotent. Lauren M. Bernardi, a Toronto based employment lawyer and human resource adviser, describes "bullying behavior as persistent, excessive and unjustified criticism and constant scrutiny of another. Bullies' behavior is malicious. Often they exclude or ignore their victims, keeping them uninformed or "out of the loop." She finds that they will undermine victims' work efforts by setting impossible goals and deadlines, sabotaging work or impeding employees' efforts at promotions or transfers. Bullies may make false allegations in memos or other company documents and allege their victims are incompetent or insubordinate. Bullies can be vindictive, cruel, and malicious.¹⁴

Who Is Likely To Be A Bully And To Be Bullied. Both men and women are equally likely to be bullies. Bullies need to control. They often are a level above their victims, are talented, educated and high performers. They may be on a fast track and have been promoted to management with little training. Elaine F. Tombaugh, president of Positive Organizations LLC, a Houston-based organization and management consulting firm, reports that a British study of almost 6,000 employees found that a bully is often an overworked, middle manager—someone who is overloaded and cannot cope; someone who is so stressed that bullying becomes a management style. Bully bosses use the stick more than the carrot. Their manipulative acts draw other people into their web.

One would think that those who are targets of bullies suffer from low self-esteem and that they are less attractive because less attractive persons generally are treated less favorably. However, Tombaugh (introduced above) describes the average victim as having the characteristics of an ideal employee who is "usually college educated, self-starting, technically skilled, able to work in teams, and is honest and ethical. Most have no history of being bullied before at work. Most victims are middle-aged women." And she adds that bullies "envy the victim's competence, social skills, positive attitude, and the fact that the victim was respected by co-workers." Victims of bullying try to get away from the bullies by transferring or may be fired or laid off. Bullies rarely are punished even when reported. Transferring the bully is a poor solution because they behave the same way wherever they are and will hurt another department in the workplace.¹⁵

Why Do Bully Bosses Bully? There are several reasons bosses express themselves aggressively. Bullying may be part of their personality and can be prompted by a macho management culture. Bully traits may be acquired by nature, but most likely spring from a lack of nurture. Stress can exacerbate bosses who have a bully streak in their personality. Organizational life is stressful. Bosses feel pressures to meet efficiency targets and to reduce costs. They find that objectives can be achieved more quickly through use of threats and intimidation. Also organization-wide downsizing can pressure bosses to talk tough.

How To Stop A Bully Boss. Aside from cutting out the tongue of an abusive manager, verbal abuse can be prevented by reconditioning training, changing the authority relationship, or by firing her/him. Before firing an abusive manager, placing her/him on probation is advised. Earning one's way off probation then would hinge on cutting out the verbal abuse.

Upper management must be involved if the workplace is to make it bully free. Changing the authority of a boss-bossed relationship is a radical but necessary solution to an abusive boss. Part of this might include subordinate evaluations of the manager. Such is an aspect of 360-degree performance evaluation of managers. Another aspect of changing the boss-bossed relationship is the self-managed team. The heavy handedness that often accompanies the manager as prodder-inspector-evaluator then is transformed to the manager as coach and/or servant of the bossed. Role-playing (possibly role reversal) and behavioral modification techniques can help stamp out abusive language and stamp in civil, respectful, collaborate language.¹⁶

What if it is your boss, president of the company, who yells at you even in the presence of others? What can you do? The best course may be to simply say with a smile covering your indignation, "I don't work well when I am yelled at and cussed out." A pro-active and tactful approach might be to request an early job evaluation session with the boss. In this session, you then can discuss the quality and quantity of your work and how verbal abuse damages your self-worth and hurts your productivity.

Individuals, who are verbally abused and bullied, should not have to fight for relief solo. Civility and respect, along side honesty, should be an organization's moral commitment. Staying in the fairway to the green of civility is not a solo act. It is a workplace-wide and business-wise business.

Protected Classes. Most corporate policy manuals do not make bullying behavior legal matters except when it constitutes harassment of protected classes. Professor Eugene Volokh of the UCLA Law School (see his web site under Employee Rights) sums up the definition of harassment as:

Putting all this together, harassment law potentially burdens any workplace speech that's offensive to at least one person in the workplace based on that person's race, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, military membership or veteran status or, in some jurisdictions, sexual orientation, marital status, political affiliation, criminal record, occupation, citizenship status, tobacco use outside work, Appalachian origin, receipt of public assistance, dishonorable discharge from the military, or personal appearance, even when the speech is political and even when it's not severe or pervasive enough to itself be actionable.¹⁷

Bullying, however wrong, cannot be stopped by current law if it is between individuals who are not different in the many ways this law professor lists. But the do and don't rules of within a workplace that make for consideration and courtesy can make a difference until if and when bullying is made against the law.

Extending Protection. The first anti-bullying law in North America came into effect on June 1, 2004. Quebec amended its Labour Standards Act to deal with psychological harassment in the workplace. This was five years after a bullied worker went on a shooting rampage at OC Transpo in Ottawa, leaving five people dead. The new Quebec law defines psychological harassment as:

Any vexatious behaviour in the form of repeated and hostile or unwanted conduct, verbal comments, actions or gestures that affect an employee's dignity or psychological or physical integrity and that results in a harmful work environment for the employee.

Many European and Scandinavian countries, including France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Spain, the Netherlands, and Norway, have introduced various regulatory responses to the problem. In the United Kingdom, Ireland and Australia, the courts currently address bullying under existing legislation.¹⁸

Only a few states in the US have proposed laws against verbal abuse and bullying. A California state bill substitutes health-impairment for discrimination, and extends **protection to all employees, working for either public or private employers, regardless of protected group status, who seek redress for being subjected to an abusive work environment**

The bill requires proof of health impairment, and the individual plaintiffs must rely solely on private attorneys. Employers are protected if they have made a serious effort to prevent and the correct cause for health impairment.¹⁹

Even if hostile environment statutes never make bullying outlawed, as they have racial discrimination and sexual harassment, creating a civil working environment is management's business.

Steps to stop bullying that management should take are:

- Establishing a clear policy that bullying or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated—an anti-harassment policy that bullying on any grounds is unacceptable, bullies will be disciplined and the victims of bullies have a right to complain without reprisal.
- Procedures for reporting bullying should be explained, such as reporting incidents to Human Resources. Inform the whole organization of the policy as is done for sexual harassment.
- Training supervisors and managers to effectively lead people and work collaboratively.

One Human Resource Manager after reading an early draft of this chapter, described the trouble he was having with a bully supervisor:

I have a supervisor who is a bully. I have worked with her since last April on her communication skills, her leadership skills, and her team building skills. It has gone in one ear and out the other. She truly believes the packaging room, where we have employees packing cookies into trays, tins, and boxes, is her private domain and she is the boss. Even when I come out to help a particular individual, she'll TRY to order me around. I don't respond well to ORDERS (never would have made it in the military). On April 19th, I gave her a verbal warning about her abusive behavior towards employees and management. After more training was of little effect, I gave her a written warning on the same subjects and warned her in writing that unless her communication style and behavior change, she will either be demoted or terminated.

Well four months later this Friday, after a week of her abusive behavior, I called her into my office to let her know that I was giving her the choice of resigning and leaving the company in good stead or demotion to packer. She stood up and barked at me that she would never resign and would never go back to packing cookies. One of the owners, whom I made sure was present and is female, heard her yell at me that I was discriminating against women and that she would sue this company and me.

Two minority women own our company. The Production Manager is a minority woman and the Quality Control Manager is a minority woman. There are seven managerial positions in this plant. Men hold only two of those positions: the General Manager, an immigrant from Poland who is an expert on cookies, and myself. Everyone else is a minority woman. So I hardly think she has a case. Now I'm in the process of writing her up for the final time and giving an account of her tenure here.²⁰

This HR Manager, Dan Kearney, had come to the conclusion that he would not ignore bully behavior. He and the General Manager fired this bully boss.

Another example: a senior executive liked to talk about “cracking the whip if people were not performing to his satisfaction.” This executive actually had a real cowboy bullwhip on his wall, and he would crack it from time to time. He was fired when he accidentally hit another senior executive as she was walking to her office.²¹

Seeking the help of Human Resources or of one’s union is the most viable recourse when bullied, but if not in a protected class, what should the individual who is bullied do? She/he should log the what, when, where and who witnessed acts of bullying. *The Bully Bulletin* lists several suggestions for the bullied:

Don’t let the bully prompt you to question your own ability, and don’t get sucked into playing the bully’s game. Keep in mind that the problem is the bully’s, not yours, and that you are dealing with far more than a simple personality conflict; you are contending with someone who is intent on dealing out psychological abuse.

On the other hand, don’t give into the common pitfall of becoming overly suspicious of everyone and everything. You do need someone – preferably away from work – with whom you can be completely candid and who can help by providing a “reality check.”

Keep a record of the effect that the bullying has on your health, on your family life and on the health of other family members.²²

Psychologist Lilia Cortina of the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor and co-author Vicki Magley reported at an American Psychological Society meeting in Toronto their findings of a survey of 1100 employees in the federal court system, including mailroom clerks, secretaries, librarians, computer analysts, managers and lawyers. Chief among their findings is that incidents of rude behavior are tied to less job satisfaction for the employee and lower productivity.²⁴

In contrast to the negative emotions that spring from uncivil and bullying behavior, Cortina and Magley, suggest an ideal workplace contains three elements:

- A sense of self-worth - The extent to which employees feel confident, competent and in control of their work and work experience.
- Results - The contributions the employee can make to the success of the business.
- Rewards and recognition - The extent to which employees feel their contributions are appropriately recognized and compensated. ²⁴

Nice Or Else. Although incivility, even when in the extreme case of bullying, is not illegal, organizations are remiss if it is not corrected, punished, or cause for discharge. Professors Pearson and Porath, the most prominent researchers of incivility, whose findings were introduced earlier, proposed guidelines stress that workplace policy and practice should be firm that incivility is not tolerated. That policy should be well known from top to bottom. They illustrate this by description of a drug company, anonymously labeled GDC, with such a policy in place. The vice president of GDC stated that he would rather risk a lawsuit for firing a skilled scientist for incivility than “risk destroying our culture, devastating employee relations, or heading into an untenable situation that could become violent.”²⁶ He said that he fired on the spot a scientist who had been nasty to secretaries and who one evening cursed a colleague and hurled a piece of equipment.

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, the Veterans Administration department of Employee Training launched an organization-wide effort to instill *civility, respect, and engagement*. One of the mechanisms that emerged from brainstorming a practical way to indicate the climate of a workgroup was a weather report. Employees in a work group could plot on a chart on the wall how they thought/felt about the climate--they could indicate by simply marking a chart from stormy to sunny how they felt things were going in their work group. In short, are we nasty or pleasant to one another?

Rudeness, bullying, and unmanaged anger rise from self-absorption. Incivility comes from egocentrism—from *me first and foremost*. Golf’s reputation for good manners springs from awareness of others first and foremost, from consideration and courtesy: Turn taking, giving players space, not speaking while another player is addressing the ball, not badmouthing others when they shank a drive, not swearing loudly at one’s own miss hits, and on the green not stepping on another player’s line to putt.

Humans swim in a sea of turbulence especially in the competitive world of business. It is swim or drown. It is: “Get out of my way. I’m coming through. I am busy, busy, busy.” Competing to stay afloat can cause us to put civility out of mind. Busy-busy that results in inconsiderate acts and disregard of others has high costs.

To shift to mixed metaphor, in the fast lane there is little thought for the quiet poise that accompanies civility. Yet, consideration of others is the social currency needed to avoid road rage and to survive on life’s busy expressways. Especially in this competitive world of high-speed performance, the perspective and pace of golf cannot be over valued.

Civility is composed of hundreds of small acts of consideration and courtesy and is quite cost effective. It is social tender: Ironically, thinking of others prompts others to think of us.

Niceness makes us acceptable in our circle of friends and workplace. No matter how busy is a golf course, it is not too busy to be nice and neither should it be in the workplace.

Jason had pointed me to principled thinking. Golf was not just a game. Rather it is an exercise in character building and good manners—learning that politeness prevents and smoothes over conflict. Golf is a moral game—moral expressed in right and wrong treatment of others. Not all who play it have a perfect temperament for the game. However, the rules and etiquette of the game tend to shape and mellow player's temperament. Civility keeps us in the fairway while going for the green, both on the golf course in the workplace.