

# Toxic Leadership



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# Nature and Scope of Toxic Leadership

- Toxic leadership, the focus of this book is closely related to other concepts such as abusive supervision , petty tyranny , workplace victimization, bullying, **workplace psychopathy**, brutal bosses , intolerable bosses, harassers, incivility, derailed leaders and destructive leadership

# Impact Of Toxic Leadership

- Disrespectful treatment that is characteristic of toxic leadership is a “social toxin” that paralyses its victims, draining energy, initiative, and desire while undermining their physical and psychological well-being.



# Impact Of Toxic Leadership(cont)

- More generally subordinates tend to react to toxic leaders in one or two ways: escape or emulation,
  - The first reaction involves an attempt to escape the destructive sphere of influence.
  - The second fundamental reaction is to view the toxic leader as a role model under the assumption that since the organization has rewarded the leader with additional rank and responsibility, destructive behavior must be the pathway to success.

# The Role of Narcissism in Toxic Leadership

- Narcissists are not comfortable in environments that call for harnessing the collective capacity of others; they will seek to control the agenda to limit open dialogue, or restrict the membership of deliberative groups to those they perceive as agreeing with them.
- Some toxic narcissists are vigilant for opportunities to humble others, especially subordinates who shown potential or may be perceived as stealing the limelight

# Surviving a Toxic Leader

- Praise in public and criticize in private. listen more and speak less. Practice what Judith Umlas calls “grateful leadership”
- There is little virtue in sycophantic, sheeplike followers. It takes courage to look powerful leaders in the eye and tell them what they need to hear rather than what they want to hear. It isn't always career enhancing, but it is sometimes the right thing to do.




# Toxic Coworkers

- Frequently peers are hesitant to report the dysfunctional behavior of their colleagues out of a desire to “keep it in the mess” or a sense of loyalty to others of their station. However, the longer it takes to get information to the right authorities, the longer toxic colleagues have to disrupt the climate.



# Mitigating Toxic Leadership

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- Mismanagement and failure to accurately and timely identify people problems is in itself a form of toxic leadership .
  - Managerial negligence undetected may contribute to malpractice and company wide toxicity.

# Mitigating Toxic Leadership(cont.)

- Overburdened supervisors also tend to overestimate their ability to discern what is going on in subordinate units and are frequently surprised to find out the extent of suffering that takes place when their direct reports become toxic.
- Toxic Leaders are organizational chameleons who carefully harness systems of power to further their selfish aims.

# Conclusion

- Tact and diplomacy are valuable skills when dealing with a toxic leader because direct confrontation can be a risky process, especially if narcissism is involved and the supervisor feels threatened. Those who courageously provide frank and honest information to superiors perform a valuable if underappreciated service.
- Understanding is an important first step, but the resolve to address the problem of toxic leadership is likely to follow only when the stewards of the profession muster the will to intervene and reduce tolerance for the use of destructive leadership styles and address the system and process that drive toxic cultures.