

## Aunt Bossy

Written by Susan Murphy

Tuesday, 03 May 2016 12:21 - Last Updated Wednesday, 04 May 2016 08:51

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### Regressed, Not Retired

*Dear Aunt Bossy,*

What is it with these retired people? I understand the ones who play golf all day, and those who dedicate the time they have earned to raise money or contribute to people in need. I get those who don't really retire, but just work less, and those who take part time jobs. I even understand those who decide to sit in a chair and read all day, or go from cultural event to cultural event as if it were a marathon, or approach shopping like an Olympic event.

*What I don't understand is those who get involved in civic and neighborhood organizations to try to re-create some middle-management dream of power and authority. I have seen these people in our community become veritable dictators, destroying good will, cooperation and any hope of an equitable working situation. They aren't even being paid for their time and "effort" and I can't imagine what motivates them.*

*I have lived in communities with many retired people and "consultants" with lots of free time. I have seen this over and over and have had to deal with this craziness too many times.*

*What's the story?*

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*Tired, not retired.*

Dear TnR,

Don't play golf? They also don't play tennis, fish, paint, write poetry or bowl on a regular basis, which leaves them with a big empty schedule they hope to fill by meddling in other peoples' business.

Sad picture you have painted here, but all too common. The people of whom you speak are suffering greatly from a lack of true self worth and have too much time on their hands, allowing them to try to make up for their lack on your time, frequently sucking up your energy while they do this.

These folks weren't the people doing what they loved or the people who gained power and authority on the job. Those are happy, or at least satisfied people, who don't have a need to exert their authority or push people around just to prove something. These are the ones who were always wanting to be where they would never get to go. They spent years bristling against an organization way bigger than they, or a boss who, in their minds, kept them down.

These were those with the sad job of having to explain to a spouse why so and so got promoted or got that job and they didn't – over and over. These are the people who felt overlooked and under-appreciated and powerless and yet operated in a corporate or organizational world which they probably joined because they thought it would offer the kind of protection and security that working for oneself never provides.

These people, in many cases, gave up a lot to try to fit in. They sacrificed individuality and put their lives into the hands of others. Now that they are retired, they view it as their last chance to

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make their mark, but they don't really understand how or they would have done that in their real jobs.

Feeling as if one missed the boat and making a late life jump for it is a very difficult way to live. This is likely all they are trying to do. People in their paths are collateral damage. Most probably, the "volunteers" think of themselves as good and nice, and do not understand why someone would object to their running things. I would also imagine they view those who don't agree with them as the enemy.

If you are forced because of circumstance to deal with someone like this, you will have to become the supportive boss and coach they never had. This will be very difficult as they will not be able to see that this is what they need. You have a very tough problem to deal with.

Also, consider that these meddlers and bullies might not be totally venal, mean-spirited or ill-bred. It is entirely possible that they just don't know how things should work in organizations, and they are imitating the poor bosses and leadership they have experienced in their lives. Perhaps they will grow and change as they learn. I know it won't be fun for you to pay for their learning curve, but it sounds as if you don't have much choice unless you want to do the work yourself.

Have empathy. Be so grateful that you do not lead their lives.

Good luck,

Bossy

## **Un-suitable**

*Dear Aunt Bossy,*

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*We have a neighbor who hit the jackpot when she sued her employer for an accident. Not sure of all the details, but she does not appear to be handicapped in any way, is quite active, and brags about her windfall.*

*Our problem is that anytime anyone looks at her cross-eyed, she runs to a lawyer.*

*How can we protect ourselves?*

*Wary*

Dear Wary,

Just make sure you have all the coverage you need and avoid her at all costs.

It is truly astounding the time and effort some put into getting money by means other than hard work. Suing, marrying, stealing, cheating. Working can be so much easier.

Best,

Bossy

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