

Aunt Bossy

Written by Susan Murphy
Wednesday, 17 April 2019 06:09



Mean Girl

Dear Aunt Bossy,

I work with a woman I do not like. Unfortunately, I am forced to spend time with her, and she is always included in our team social gatherings.

□□□□□□□□□□ I know I can't completely avoid her, but I would like to keep her away from me. It is rarely necessary for me to confer with her about my work, but I can't be perceived to be avoiding her. What can I do so she doesn't want to engage with me without having her work actively against me?

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No Time To Waste

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Dear NTTW,

Oh, my. The steps to accomplish your goal are quite simple, but require some discipline to avoid being called out.

First, and most importantly, do not make eye contact with her. Ever. If you have to talk to her, you can look just past her, or at any part of her face but her eyes. Don't be too dramatic and look far from her or it will be noticed by others.

Don't interrupt her once she is talking, but learn to talk over her when she starts a sentence or conversation, so you grab the conversation.

If she senses you are up to something and tries to ingratiate herself with you, reject it, subtly. For example, if she gives you a gift, say thank you and put it aside. If it is wrapped, do not unwrap it in front of her or anyone else. If she tries to give you something of hers, say "Don't you want it?" If she asks you to lunch or a social function, ask her who else is coming. Or ask, "Is everyone else busy?" Always use a lovely tone of voice.

Be very polite. You can ask her, in a very polite tone to explain herself by saying, "I'm curious, why do you say that?" "That is interesting," is another non-committal comment.

Never, ever give her a compliment when you are alone, or ask her a question unless forced (see above). Be sure to praise other people around her, and come up with some benign compliment to give her when others are listening.

Don't say anything bad about her to other people. Be sure to sit as far away from her as possible at any social event. Always greet her when your paths cross, with only a "hello, (name)." If you have to talk, make banal comments about the weather. When you are talking to others around her, steer the conversation to things you know she is not familiar with, like cool vacation spots, restaurants she probably doesn't know about, etc.

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Taking these actions will invalidate her as a human being, and make her feel worthless and insecure. If she is feisty and reacts, especially in front of other people, act like you can't imagine what she is talking about.

However, I have a question for you: WHY ON EARTH DO YOU WANT TO DO THIS? What is wrong with you? You will basically be committing murder, with her spirit and self-confidence as the victims.

By the way, behaving in an opposite manner – making eye contact, greeting someone enthusiastically, praising others, showing gratitude for even the smallest gift, seeking another out, showing interest – is a sure way to make another person feel good about her or himself, and about you. I suspect I might be asking too much of you if I suggest that.

If I were you, I'd spend your time and energy figuring out what you are lacking that would lead you to try to annihilate another person who appears to have done you no wrong.

I find the whole question pathetic, but realize we do not walk in your shoes, so none of us knows what has created such insecurities within you. Take a deep and close look at yourself, and get help if you need it, so you can figure this out and move out of a spiritual cesspool.

Good luck,

Aunt Bossy