

CYNTHIA CLAY
RAY OLITT

PEER POWER

TRANSFORMING WORKPLACE
RELATIONSHIPS



Praise for *Peer Power*

“This book should be required reading for all team members, whether it is a project team or a small organizational team. The framework and vocabulary in this book are invaluable for day-to-day team experiences, especially when dealing with ‘unique’ behaviors.

“If you are the leader, get it for the whole team. If you’re a team member get it for yourself.”

–**Ben Snyder**, CEO, Systemation

“Who hasn’t had a communication problem with a peer? The authors have outlined five clear and sensible strategies for a lifetime of continued peer interaction. Not that it won’t happen again, but this will help when it does! Cynthia and Ray are brave for sharing their own stories of poor communications. It certainly helps readers feel as if they are not alone in their communication missteps. Their experiences will stay with you!

“Bravo to the authors!”

–**Beverly Kaye**, Founder and CEO, Career Systems International
Coauthor of *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em: Getting Good People to Stay*

“Whether you’ve been working fifty days or fifty years, you need this book! Its pages are chock-full of valuable insights into others—and more importantly, into yourself. Cynthia and Ray’s amazing tools will help you discard any old habits that have perpetuated difficult relationships. You will easily recognize the ‘people’ described, and be able to empower yourself in repositioning your own relationships.

“I recommend making this book a personal assignment. You’ll see the results the very next day.”

–**Maryann Nelson**, C-Suite Business Consultant
and Executive Coach

“We all work with difficult individuals—be they colleagues, bosses, subordinates, vendors or customers. *Peer Power* tells relevant stories, gives concrete examples of solutions and provides real tools to repair relationships with these individuals. Practicing these tools improves effectiveness, reduces stress levels, helps build our company and makes this a better place to work!”

–**Karen Howlett**, Owner/President, McSweeney Steel Company

“Strangely enough, despite our shared humanity, interacting with other people remains the most challenging aspect of work. We all need a ‘How-To’ book on building and repairing relationships. *Peer Power* is just that book. Cynthia and Ray combine social science with experience and common sense to give us a practical guide to creating happier (and more productive) times in the workplace.

“Regardless of your role—executive, manager, or coworker—read this book. To quote Chapter Two: ‘Take Responsibility.’ Your organization will thank you!”

—**Ron Gajewski**, President, Beyond ROI, Inc.,
The Measurement Experts

“Cynthia Clay and Ray Olitt propose principles and strategies that can significantly increase your productivity and satisfaction in working relationships, especially tough ones. They describe several familiar and troublesome ‘mistakes’ workmates often make, then help us avoid them by applying four essential principles and five key strategies. As a long-term executive coach and organization development consultant, I find their counsel invaluable in helping any person earn the trust and respect of their colleagues. Peers can create their own ‘power’—by establishing perceptions that they are credible (demonstrating competence, propriety, and positive intent) and that there is high potential for mutual benefit in their working relationships (affirming for each colleague that his/her and their objectives will be met).

“*Peer Power* is a valuable addition to each working library!”

—**Ron Scott**, Principal, Scott Associates

“*Peer Power* gives more than just insight into complex relationships at work—it offers real solutions to improve those relationships. Reading *Peer Power*, I felt as if Cynthia and Ray were at my side, teaching me about the various problems coworkers present, and showing me how to address those problems using relevant examples and scenarios. The practices proposed really work to enhance productivity and collegiality.”

—**Shelly Crocker**, Managing Member of Crocker Law Group, PLLC
and Resolve Legal, PLLC

“This book gives you practical insights into how you react to people today and what you can adjust in order to get the results you need. As you explore more deeply into what is happening with others, this book will shed light on what is blocking you from getting the results you want. No matter where you are on the

scale as a communicator, you will gain new perspective when you read this book and apply what you learn."

–**Anne Warfield**, CSP & Outcome Strategist, Impression
Management Professionals

"*Peer Power* teaches readers how to reduce workplace tension and have productive business relationships through the principles of open and honest communication. Whether you're a CEO or a line worker, this book is a must read. It's as practical as it is inspiring."

–**Mark Levy**, Author of *Accidental Genius: Using Writing to
Generate Your Best Ideas, Insight, and Content*

About This Book

Why is this topic important?

The most challenging aspect of any job is working with other people. Difficult coworkers and bosses can harm morale and stymie productivity. Dysfunctional behavior gets expressed in different ways: the manipulators deceive people to get what they want; the whiners complain about people who bug them; the attackers verbally assault those who won't budge; the bullies intimidate in order to get their way.

As difficult as these relationship problems have been in the past, they are intensified by the demands of the new workplace. The need to collaborate with others to get work done has never been greater.

What can you achieve with this book?

By using the principles of open, honest communication presented in this book, your workplace relationships can be transformed. You'll build your foundation of interpersonal success using principles of being real, taking responsibility, extending respect, and building relationships. You'll learn to apply five strategies at the moment of a need. You'll discover how to build your peer power, win support from others, and manage difficult behavior when conflict arises.

How is this book organized?

The book is organized so you can navigate to get what you need. To support your skill development, the book begins with three questionnaires: "About You," "About Them," and a Personal Self-Assessment. In the first chapter we look at interpersonal behaviors that most of us have tried but don't work. In Chapter 2 we introduce the four key principles that can shape your general approach to more effective interaction, and in Chapter 3 we dive into the five strategies that you will use if interpersonal problems become serious.

In each of the nine chapters that follow (Chapters 4–12), we tackle a challenging character who may bedevil you at work. We start each of these chapters with a case study so you can vicariously experience the impact of various frustrating coworkers. If you'd like to work with a road map, turn to the cheat sheet at the end of each chapter. We also suggest what to do if your initial strategy doesn't work (Plan B).

The final chapters focus on how to handle unexpected obstacles and how to manage technology in the communication process.

About NetSpeed Learning Solutions



NetSpeed Learning Solutions supports organizations in developing better leaders and more engaged employees by providing training content, learning systems, and consulting expertise. Headquartered in Seattle, Washington, the company serves clients across the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia.

Founded in 2000 as a leadership development company, NetSpeed Learning Solutions licenses programs to develop the skills of first- and second-level managers, customer service providers, and contributing professionals. Instructor-led training programs blended with online reinforcement and measurement tools ensure learning transfer.

With the shift to virtual learning, NetSpeed Learning Solutions' popular courses have helped hundreds of trainers develop the skills they need to transfer successfully from the face-to-face classroom to the web training environment. To learn more about the Virtual Facilitator Trainer Certification course, visit www.netspeedlearning.com/interactive/.

PEER POWER

Transforming Workplace Relationships

CYNTHIA CLAY
AND RAY OLITT

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Published by Jossey-Bass

A Wiley Imprint

One Montgomery Street, Suite 1200, San Francisco, CA 94104-4594

www.josseybass.com

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Clay, Cynthia, 1955–

Peer power : transforming workplace relationships / Cynthia Clay & Ray Olitt.

pages cm

Includes index.

ISBN 978-1-118-20545-7 (pbk.); 978-1-118-22728-2 (ebk.); 978-1-118-22850-0 (ebk.); 978-1-118-23046-6 (ebk.)

1. Conflict management. 2. Interpersonal relations. 3. Work environment—Social aspects. I. Olitt, Ray, 1943– II. Title.

HD42.C545 2012

658.3'145—dc23

2011048659

Printed in the United States of America

PB Printing 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*For my husband, Leo, and my children, Brandon, Grayce,
and Jessica: You continually remind me of how blessed I
am. I love you bunches.*

–Cynthia

*For my wife, Harriet: You are the best peer a person could
ever have. I am so fortunate you are mine.*

–Ray

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Acknowledgments

THE JOURNEY OF COAUTHORING A BOOK can be a long one and we would not have made it this far without the dedicated support of some important collaborators.

Thank you to Elaine Smith, operations manager at NetSpeed Learning Solutions, who not only formatted the first edition of the book, but also edited and proofed its contents, and mediated our disagreements about punctuation and grammar. “Switzerland!” we called out whenever we needed her.

A big hug to Bev Kaye, a mentor and friend, who generously reviewed our drafts, graciously offered feedback, warmly encouraged our efforts, and kindly introduced us to her network of authors.

Appreciation to Sara Glerum, who edited our early attempts at writing this book and gave us pointed feedback that kept us on track.

Special thanks to Paul Petrucci, who added his insights and suggestions in the final months of writing and editing. He helped us bridge our writing styles and find our combined voice.

Thanks to Harriet Olitt, who reviewed early chapter drafts and offered feedback to clarify our original ideas.

Last, but not least, we thank Leo Brodie, who shepherded the first edition of the book to completion, developed the style guide, provided feedback on the final draft, and helped us navigate the mysteries of electronic publishing.

We appreciate you all so much!

Introduction

T **WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?**

THE MOST CHALLENGING ASPECT of any job is working with other people. Difficult coworkers and bosses can test anyone's ability to get along and get things done.

In a survey about workplace conflict conducted by NetSpeed Learning Solutions, six hundred respondents felt that interpersonal difficulties had seriously damaged their productivity and job satisfaction. Sixty-two percent of the respondents said they left a job in part because of a difficult person. Thirty percent reported a challenging coworker was currently frustrating them. When asked to write about the frustrating coworker, some of the responses included:

I dread going to work to be barraged by this individual's negativity.



I often need to "run interference" because other employees also find this individual difficult to work with.

For many of the respondents, the person causing them the most trouble was their boss:

This person is a childish, overbearing micromanager, leaving me powerless to perform my job and therefore feeling demeaned and demoralized.



I frequently have to circumvent this manager to get projects from their department completed.

How do these difficult coworkers and bosses make things hard for the people around them? Their dysfunctional behavior gets expressed in different ways: the manipulators deceive people to get what they want; the whiners complain about people who bug them; the attackers verbally assault those who won't budge; the bullies intimidate in order to get their way.

As difficult as these relationship problems have been in the past, they are intensified by the demands of the new workplace. Today the need to collaborate with others to get work done has never been greater. But there are business trends that make dealing with others infinitely more challenging. Employees are burdened with increased responsibility but limited authority. They need to deal with people across the country or across the world, in different time zones, with different cultural expectations, yet they don't see people's facial expressions or body language. In work settings like these, a simple e-mail might be misconstrued and create conflict.

With such escalating challenges, is there a way to change the outcome? Yes—by using the principles of open, honest communication, your workplace relationships can be transformed. Let us tell you the story of how we came up with the principles, practices, and strategies you're about to learn.

OUR COLLABORATIVE INSIGHT

Five years ago, Ray and Cynthia met for a networking lunch in a noisy Italian restaurant (picture a cup of crayons and a basket of

crusty bread sitting on top of a butcher paper tablecloth). Ray, an organization development consultant, described the workshop he had been leading to help people with little authority get better results at work. Cynthia, the owner of a successful training and consulting company, shared the approaches her organization used to train people in leadership and influence skills. As we compared notes, we realized that we were dealing with similar themes, dissatisfactions, and challenges.

In our classes, we frequently coached disillusioned and frustrated employees who were unable to collaborate with colleagues they neither understood nor appreciated. We wanted to help them but we were stymied by the lack of a comprehensive resource that nailed the critical techniques needed to resolve work challenges.

Sure, there were plenty of communication books out there. One offered a model for having a tough conversation; another described how to kick butt when you work with a toxic person. Some of these books were pretty good but others were full of nice-sounding theories that collapsed when applied in the real world. We found ourselves recommending this chapter from one book and that model from another source, mixed in with our own experiences and opinions.

Like many trainers, we were always on the lookout for the most practical actions and strategies our learners needed. As we talked we realized that we might be just the right people to synthesize some of the critical communication practices we had absorbed, originated, tried out, kept, or discarded over the years. As we grew more excited, we scribbled all over that paper tablecloth. After one hour we had covered it with diagrams, strategies, ideas, and potential content, in a rainbow of colors. Our project was launched.

During our collaboration, we came to appreciate that we were not just two people who were trainers and coaches, but we were also seasoned managers who had experienced dysfunctions in the workplace firsthand. Ray has managed employees in industries as diverse as banking, aerospace, and insurance. Cynthia spent many years managing individuals and teams in banking and health care, and now serves as the president and CEO of NetSpeed Learning Solutions.

Like you, we've worked with coworkers who slack off and don't produce. We've endured people who steal credit. We've worked with colleagues who, frankly, just seemed clueless. We've been steamrolled by managers who have to get their own way. We've coped with misguided leaders who were blinded by their prejudices. We've experienced having to go home at night exhausted, trying to figure out how to get through these challenges. And we've suffered the dread of waking up the next day and going back into work to do it all over again.

It's tempting to blame the slackers, the bullies, the whiners, and others for impeding your ability to get the job done. But blaming and attacking others won't produce the results you want. You can't force your peers (or your boss) to change. In fact, there is only one thing you *can* change about these situations: your own behavior.

In writing this book, we started with the premise that everyone is worthy of respect, and that behind every bad behavior there is some internal need that is not being met. In ways that may be hard to see, your own behavior may be influencing the situation. In fact, changing your behavior is the only way you can influence the outcome.

Based on these assumptions, we wrote the book to share practical steps that will end your sleepless nights and stop the recurrent conversations about how to change others. As the book evolved, we've watched people in our workshops use these ideas in their own lives to transform impossible situations into incredible successes. Our hope is that the book will start you on the path of conscious, well-planned interactions that can make an amazing difference in your daily life at work.

It took us five years to analyze our successes and failures, capture our thinking, review the literature, interview experts, survey clients and colleagues, and try out our recommended techniques. Along the way we discarded the silly stuff that sounds cool but just plain doesn't work. We eliminated the fluff, the hype, and the clever hook to zoom in on the core principles, practices, and strategies that will make you successful. We've done this painstaking analysis because we knew that what we wrote had to

be immediately applicable (or we wouldn't sell books or get hired to teach your next workshop).

We are grateful for the wisdom of many writers who've come before us: Geoff Bellman (author of *Getting Things Done When You're Not in Charge*), Al Switzler (coauthor of *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High*), Roger Fisher and William Ury (coauthors of *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*), and Mel Silberman (coauthor of *People Smart: Developing Your Interpersonal Intelligence*). Their ideas have influenced our practices over the years. We've included their books as well as resources by other authors in a list of references in Appendix 3.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

We've called this book *Peer Power* because we believe that you can develop your ability to bring powerful communication practices to relationships with your workplace peers.

You'll build your foundation of interpersonal success using principles of being real, being responsible, extending respect, and building relationships. And you'll learn to apply five strategies (Collaborating, Going Head-to-Head, Compromising, Coaching, and Caring-for-Self) at the moment of need (a deteriorating relationship with a coworker or boss). You'll discover how to win support from others and manage difficult behavior when conflict arises.

Whether you hold the role of boss or employee, you'll find that these techniques will help you feel in control of yourself and your job. The result? Reduced stress, increased productivity, greater collaboration, fewer mistakes, less rework, more effective workplace conversations, and a heightened sense of self-efficacy and self-mastery. Through peer power, we're confident you can transform workplace relationships.

Our book is organized so you can navigate to get what you need. In Chapter 1 we look at interpersonal behaviors that most of us have tried but don't work. In Chapter 2 we introduce the four key principles that will be your foundation for effective communication, and in Chapter 3 we dive into the five strategies that

you will use if interpersonal problems become serious. We recommend that you read Chapters 1 through 3 before exploring the case studies you'll find later in the book. The case studies will have greater impact if you've learned the key principles and strategies beforehand.

In the nine chapters that follow, we tackle a challenging character who may bedevil you at work. To maintain reader interest, we alternate behaviors that are aggressive with those that are passive. The title of each case chapter indicates that any challenging character can begin to function more constructively, depending on how you use your peer power. You'll read about:

- The attacker (the colleague who repeatedly expresses his anger and frustration in the form of inappropriate personal criticism)
- The whiner (that coworker who complains without taking responsibility for improving conditions that surround her)
- The scene stealer (the peer who sets about building her reputation at your expense)
- The drive-by boss (a leader who ignores some of his key management responsibilities and doesn't meet the needs of his employees or the organization)
- The manipulator (the coworker who attempts to influence your attitude or behavior through deception or secrecy)
- The clueless colleague (a coworker who is insensitive to her negative impact on the work environment)
- The faux-smart boss (the boss who has unrealistic confidence in his own ideas and skills, often accompanied by a lack of confidence in his employees)
- The slacker (the coworker whose poor performance damages your performance)
- The bully (a colleague who uses unreasonable demands and inappropriate threats to get her way)

Of course, we are using each of these labels as shorthand. People are much more complex than the labels we ascribe. Each

of us exhibits a range of behaviors that could potentially place us into one or more of these negative categories. Throughout the book you'll find reminders that we have all exhibited negative tendencies. We also strongly feel that even the most challenging people have many admirable traits and skills.

If there is someone at work you're having a hard time with, complete the questionnaire, "About Them," you'll find at the end of this chapter. (It will help you identify which category he falls into.)

We start Chapters 4 through 12 with case studies so you can vicariously experience the impact of various frustrating coworkers. These characters have all played parts in our own workplace dramas. At times we recommend practices that we may not have had the skills to apply when we originally encountered that challenging person. Of course, we've changed the names and modified the details, but they all represent very real challenging types that you will recognize instantly.

You may notice that the list you just read does not include behaviors that may bother you but rarely harm you. We don't include coworkers who refuse to socialize, have major mood swings, brag a lot, or are very anxious, for example. While these are often frustrating behaviors, we can learn to live with them. Instead, we focused on giving you tools to deal with behaviors that can have a detrimental impact on your performance.

If you'd like to work with a road map, turn to the cheat sheet at the end of each of these chapters. Each case chapter includes clues to look for, assumptions to remember, and principles and practices to use. If you want to read actual dialogue, we've added scripted responses to various tough cases. We also suggest what to do if your initial strategy does not work (Plan B). Our goal is to make it easy for you to use this book to develop practical strategies to get results.

As to the writing convention that we follow, we decided to forgo the tortuous "he/she," "she/he," or "s/he" when referring to an individual in our case chapters. Instead, where the example features a woman, we've referred to the difficult character throughout that chapter as "she." Where the example features a man, we've opted to use "he" throughout. Obviously all the techniques we introduce may be used with both men and women.

NOTE TO ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERS

We believe that organizations desperately need employees at all levels who use solid communication practices. Based on many years of organization development experience, we know that many organizations are rife with interpersonal friction, turf wars, and destructive conflict. As a result, productivity, customer service, and morale suffer. We've written this book for project managers, sales and customer service staff, production personnel, administrative and human resources staff—anyone who must work with and through others to get the job done.

Communication challenges are exacerbated in a time of globalization (workers are often separated by distance and time), mergers and joint ventures (people in different cultures are required to adapt quickly), economic instability (employees face the threat of layoffs and resource constraints), and generational differences (employees now span four generations).

Interpersonal dynamics in the workplace will undergo a sea change in the next decade as a wave of new, less experienced workers flows in, replacing the ebbing supply of skilled, experienced Baby Boomers. Though well versed in the uses of technology (social networking, text messaging, blogging, and so on), these inexperienced Gen Y workers are unprepared to deal with the complexity of organizational politics. When they encounter challenging people or situations, they lack the models and communication skills to get the results they want, even as demands for increasing productivity are escalating. Since the highest work priority for Generation Y is a good relationship with bosses and coworkers,¹ a solid foundation of interpersonal skills is crucial.

Every generation needs to master the communication practices that lead to satisfying and effective work relationships. According to the Conference Board Research Group, Americans' job satisfaction fell to a record low at the end of 2009, with ratings for job interest and satisfaction with coworkers declining as

¹Robert Half International, "What Millennial Workers Want: How to Attract and Retain Gen Y Employees," 2007.

well.² It's more important than ever to supply your workers with training to help maintain an engaging work environment that leads to higher productivity.

We encourage you to adopt and share the practices in this book with others inside your organization. Deliver workshops; hand out copies of the book as reference tools; listen to our podcasts; engage employees by using our web-based questionnaires. We want to partner with you to meet these challenges. Together we can transform the workplace.

YOUR TESTIMONIALS

We invite you to share your experiences as you begin to implement these practices. As you try out the techniques we recommend, you may find that you get results that thrill you. If so, please share them with us by sending an e-mail to peerpower@netspeedlearning.com. On the other hand, you may find that nothing we suggest gets you where you want to go. Tell us that, too.

With your permission, we may post your examples at our website: www.netspeedlearning.com/peerpower. We will also give you the opportunity to read challenging case studies and recommend approaches for dealing with these difficult people. If you need help figuring out what's driving you crazy, you'll find the same questionnaires ("About You" and "About Them") that appear at the end of this chapter on the website as well.

LET'S GO

If you're ready to get started, turn to the next page and answer a few questions about your skills and behaviors first (Questionnaire: "About You"). You'll find our commentary about your answers in Appendix 1. Then take a look at the behaviors of your frustrating colleague (Questionnaire: "About Them").

²Jeannine Aversa, "Americans' job satisfaction falls to record low," *Seattle Times*, January 5, 2010 (<http://tinyurl.com/29mq2ag>).

QUESTIONNAIRE: “ABOUT YOU”

This questionnaire asks you to think about your interpersonal strengths, weaknesses, and beliefs. Answer honestly—no one will see this but you—and then turn to Appendix 1 and see how your answers compare to ours. As you answer the questions openly and review our responses, you’ll begin to understand the communication philosophy that underpins all of our case studies. If you would like to complete this questionnaire online, you can find a copy of it at our website: www.netspeedlearning.com/peerpower.

1. I can improve my communication skills.	Yes	No
2. What happens to me at work is usually not related to my own behavior.	Yes	No
3. I prefer to take responsibility for my own actions.	Yes	No
4. Even if I change my behavior, the situation usually doesn’t change.	Yes	No
5. I am willing to make the first move to improve a challenging situation.	Yes	No
6. When someone is behaving badly, it’s hard for me to feel compassionate.	Yes	No
7. It’s easy for me to put myself in the shoes of other people to imagine their point of view.	Yes	No
8. I try to be open about my thoughts and feelings.	Yes	No
9. I find gossip to be a great stress reliever.	Yes	No
10. I discourage complaining.	Yes	No
11. I wish that the top leaders in my organization would just fix the messes at work and leave me out of it.	Yes	No
12. I strive to listen before I speak.	Yes	No
13. If I have an opinion, I always put it on the table first.	Yes	No
14. I often feel impatient with others.	Yes	No
15. I try to leave my emotions at the door when I arrive at work.	Yes	No
16. I expect others to apologize when they offend me.	Yes	No
17. I offer an apology even though I may not be 100 percent at fault.	Yes	No
18. I make sure I know who’s at fault when things go wrong.	Yes	No
19. When it gets confrontational, I shut down.	Yes	No

(continued)

20.	I reach out to someone I may have offended.	Yes	No
21.	If I'm not sure what someone is thinking or feeling, I ask for his or her thoughts.	Yes	No
22.	I take people at face value.	Yes	No
23.	I'm good at reading others, so I rarely need to ask their opinions.	Yes	No
24.	I thank others often.	Yes	No
25.	My communication skills are as good as my technical skills.	Yes	No

QUESTIONNAIRE: “ABOUT THEM”

The “About Them” questionnaire helps you identify which challenging behaviors you are dealing with in your work environment. Before you begin, it might be helpful to list the key people with whom you interact and then rate the quality of your relationship. For each of those with a low rating, complete the questionnaire.

Simply circle “yes” or “no” for each question. Answer honestly—no one will see this but you. If you would like to complete this questionnaire for multiple people, you can find a copy of it at our website: www.netspeedlearning.com/peerpower.

Does your boss or coworker . . .

1.	Use name-calling, sarcasm, or cursing?	Yes	No
2.	Verbally abuse you?	Yes	No
3.	Blame you personally for problems?	Yes	No
4.	Tease you about your mistakes or weaknesses?	Yes	No
5.	Blame problems and conditions on others?	Yes	No
6.	Not appear willing to be personally responsible for negative outcomes?	Yes	No
7.	Talk endlessly about problems instead of taking action?	Yes	No
8.	Constantly criticize others' work behind their backs?	Yes	No
9.	Appear friendly to your face yet criticize you often behind your back?	Yes	No
10.	Take over tasks that don't belong to him/her?	Yes	No

(continued)

11.	Take credit for accomplishments that are not his/her own?	Yes	No
12.	Inflate his/her own accomplishments?	Yes	No
13.	Hold staff meetings infrequently or without planning?	Yes	No
14.	Fail to provide his/her employees with clear or reasonable expectations or feedback?	Yes	No
15.	Fail to communicate with his/her employees or keep them informed on important developments?	Yes	No
16.	Ignore performance problems?	Yes	No
17.	Flatter you or act unusually sweet?	Yes	No
18.	Deceive you or cause you to feel deceived?	Yes	No
19.	Present only positive reasons for an action with no balancing negatives?	Yes	No
20.	Misrepresent or exclude data to support his/her position?	Yes	No
21.	Fail to clean up his/her messes?	Yes	No
22.	Borrow items without returning them?	Yes	No
23.	Make inappropriate or loud sounds—whistles, burps, slurps, sniffs, music, etc.?	Yes	No
24.	Make long-winded pronouncements on topics or talk excessively?	Yes	No
25.	Discourage or argue with input from his/her employees?	Yes	No
26.	Micromanage his/her employees?	Yes	No
27.	Take back tasks once delegated?	Yes	No
28.	Rate his/her employees too critically?	Yes	No
29.	Break commitments or not fulfill tasks you need?	Yes	No
30.	Deliver tasks to you late or with poor quality?	Yes	No
31.	Fail to communicate with you or provide you with information you need?	Yes	No
32.	Repeatedly ask for your help?	Yes	No
33.	Make demands that you ignore procedures to meet his/her needs?	Yes	No
34.	Threaten to take a problem to your boss rather than trying to resolve it with you first?	Yes	No
35.	Delay a decision or withhold support until you comply with a demand?	Yes	No
36.	Refuse to listen to your objections to complying with his/her wishes?	Yes	No

Here is the key that matches a label for a challenging character to the statements in the questionnaire.

<i>Statement #s</i>	<i>Label</i>	<i>Chapter</i>
1–4	Attacker	4
5–8	Whiner	5
9–12	Scene Stealer	6
13–16	Drive-by Boss	7
17–20	Manipulator	8
21–24	Clueless Colleague	9
25–28	Faux-Smart Boss	10
29–32	Slacker	11
33–36	Bully	12

Decide which label best describes your challenging person. If you answered “yes” to two or more statements within a set, chances are that you are dealing with a behavior that we discuss in one of the case studies in the book. However, even one item might indicate that is your person’s pattern, depending upon how serious and pervasive the item is. Before you turn to that chapter, we invite you to read Chapters 1 through 3 to learn more about our mistakes (what not to do), as well as what principles, practices, and strategies we suggest you adopt (what to do).

Mistakes We Have Made (And You Can Avoid): Manipulating, Whining, Attacking, and Bullying

IN WRITING THIS BOOK, we talked through our failures, embarrassing moments, and just downright humiliating attempts to get others to change their behavior or do what we wanted. It was humbling to revisit the dumb mistakes we made with challenging peers. We attempted to get their support or manage their difficult behaviors by manipulating, whining, attacking, and bullying. We still aren't perfect, but we have learned from these common mistakes and we can speak from painful experience: these behaviors may work in the short run but they rarely work in the long run.

We're going to take them one by one and tell you exactly why they don't work. In Chapter 2 we'll introduce some principles that will get better, consistently positive results. Through mastering these principles, you will begin your journey to developing your peer power.