The Pharaoh and The Dwarf: How to be empowered in the most difficult work environments

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Our Disclaimers
• No animals were harmed in the development of this session
• We both love pumpkin – and think it should be a year round flavor
• Dean’s military disclaimer
• We have both worked for many, many, bosses – so don’t try to figure out which ones we’re talking about…… we know people……

Objectives
Participants in this session will:

1. Define the most common toxic management/leadership behaviors and the most effective ways to reframe those behaviors in themselves and in others.
2. Identify key management methods for leading up, or leading their leaders.
3. Develop a plan for personal empowerment in difficult authority relationships.
Difficult Work Environments

Harder et al. (2014) define a toxic work environment as an environment that negatively impacts the viability of an organization.

Why is this an important topic for Nurse Leaders?

1. Unhealthy and damaging to those who work there.
   - Physical Health problems
   - Mental Health problems

2. Nurse leaders of all levels can significantly influence the tone for the work environment

3. Impacts motivation and morale of all who work in the environment

The Toxic Triangle

A Fish Rots from the Head Down

The Why? Our Stories for Why

The Top 5 Destructive Leadership Behaviors

1. Micromanaging
2. All stick – NO CARROT
3. Passive Aggressive – Avoids Conflict
   – Passes blame
   – self-oriented
4. Lack of vision
5. Poor communication skills
   – not listening
   – self-oriented
What we learned:

Our ability to change our boss is limited

Our ability to change ourselves is only limited by our willingness to change.

The Benefits of Reframing

1. Reduced stress level
2. Empowered thinking
   • Increased emotional intelligence
   • Self-regulation / Mental Strength
   • Resilience
3. Increases creativity & problem solving
4. Stop dreading going to work every day

Keys to Empowered thinking

• Don’t take things personally
   – Proactively create emergency response plans
   – Focus on disarming them not defending you
   – Choose happy over being right
• You are not a victim
   – Stop keeping score
• Make increasing resilience a goal
   – Limit pity parties
   – If you can’t control it – don’t obsessively overthink it (and check out Rhonda’s session tomorrow)
• Develop safe accountability
Let’s Practice

What are the most difficult challenges in your work environment?

**Don't take things personally**
- Proactively create emergency response plans
- Focus on disarming them not defending you
- Choose happy over being right

**You are not a victim**
- Stop keeping score

**Make increasing resilience a goal**
- Limit pity parties
- If you can't control it -- don't obsessively overthink it (and check out Rhonda's session tomorrow)

**Develop safe accountability**

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Plan for Personal Empowerment

1.

2.

3.

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Discussion

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