



Jedi Mind Tricks for Lawyers: Effective Ways to Respond to Bullying Behavior

Webinars For Busy Lawyers
April 9th, 2025

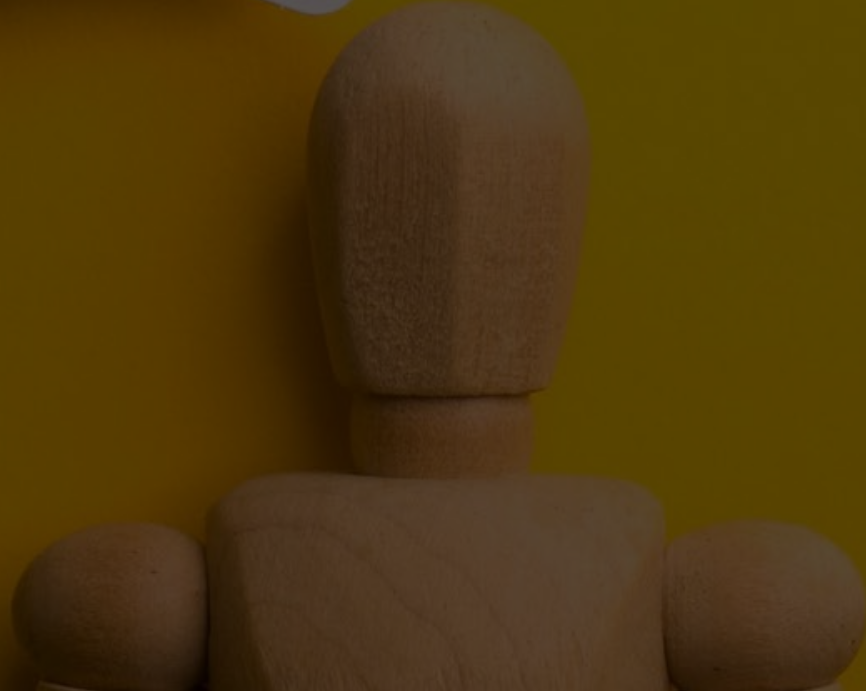


Incivility
Impacts
Well-being

My Two Warnings



1. A couple of unusual metaphors (perhaps)
2. Don't do everything I suggest (take it slowly)



Two Common Messages

- Ignore the bully and they will stop
- Punch the bully in the mouth and they will stop

(In both approaches, the bully decides your response.)



A pair of red boxing gloves is shown on a wooden surface. One glove is lying flat, while the other is propped up against it. The background is a blurred wooden wall.

Mike Tyson

“Everyone has a plan until they
get punched in the face.”

Specific Plan vs. General Strategy

2 Important
Components

1. Take an **Active Approach** based on your strategy

2. Active approaches **vary widely** given the circumstances

Develop a General Strategy

I suggest something like...

- Be Self-Centered (take care of myself first)
- Be Aware (what do I need, what is within my control, how are my surroundings affecting me, what is my bandwidth right now)
- Be Focused on Your Goal (decide ahead of time, professionalism, resilience)
- Be the Change you want to see in the world (be a role model, be an ally)
- Be Prepared (get comfortable with various techniques)

Taking Care of Yourself First

Sleep

Diet and Exercise

Mindfulness

Social Supports

Cognitive Restructuring

Hobbies





Be Aware

What is within my control?



The burdens we
cannot control

- Talk about them
- Share the burden
- Focus on your resilience
- Adopt new well-being routines
- Have multiple tools for various circumstances



Be Focused on Your Goal

- Like the overall guiding theme to a case
- Have a predetermined goal or approach to your interactions
- This helps to prevent you from being susceptible to constant reactions to others' behaviors



Be the Change You Want to See in the World

- Act as though all the quiet observers are watching you to learn how to respond to this bully
- Remind yourself that people are watching and remembering how you respond and how the bully behaves
- Be an Ally
- See something, say something (in the moment, afterward to the affected person, to others who can contribute to the change)





Be Prepared:
Become a Martial
Arts Master



Good Magician Vs. Bad Magician

How Do We Develop an Effective Strategy?

- Understand why a strategy works
- Use your strengths to your advantage
- Practice effective techniques
- Address fears head on
- Change the game



All About Perception

How do you view the
threat?

How do you view yourself?

Let's practice

- What do you see?
- What else do you see?





Aligning Strategy With Bullying Source

- Opposing counsel
- Pro se
- Judge
- Client
- Coworker
- Manager/supervisor

“Create Distance”: View them differently

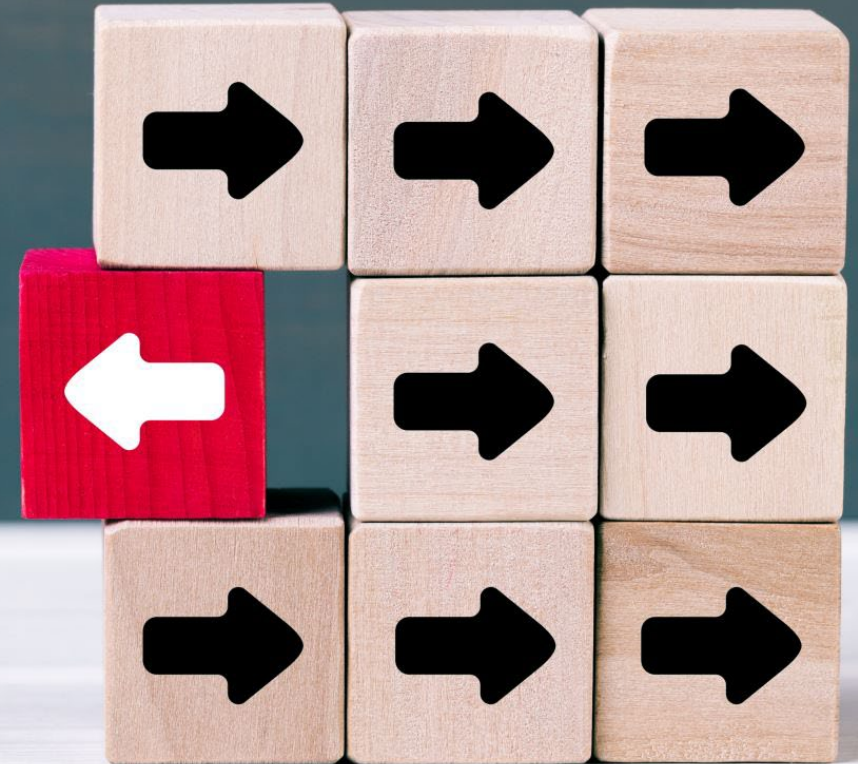
What happened
to them?

Not

What's wrong
with them?

“Create Distance”: Insert a pause

- Slow down the process
- Make the implicit explicit



Separating Out the Components



Your identity

Vs

The objective of the attack

Reinterpret it

Insult → Compliment

Discouragement →
Encouragement

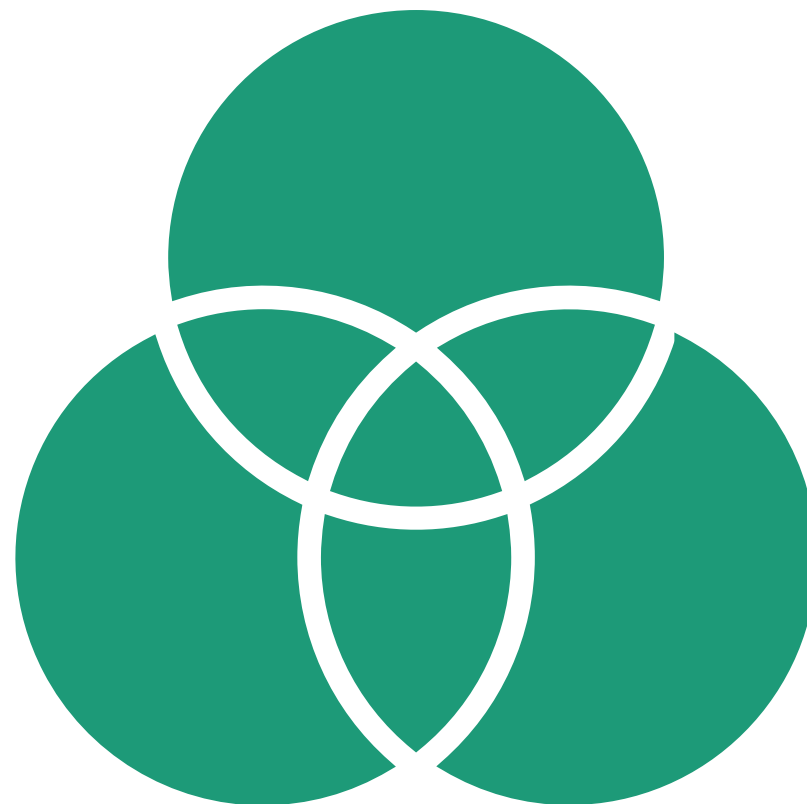
Perceived attacked →
Sign of vulnerability

How does it need to be addressed?

Is this something that you need to deal with by yourself?

Or

Is this something that needs to have the light of day shined upon it? (racism, sexism, injustice, unethical behaviors, etc.)



Directly Responding

- Make sure your response is active (even if that action is “not responding”)
- Get more comfortable with the possible end result (i.e., any fears you have), then...
 - Call their bluff
 - Call it out directly
 - Make the implicit explicit (“I see what you’re doing.”)
 - Involve others

Advice for Allies

Don't:

- Try to quickly solve the problem
- Think you need to have all the answers
- Wait to have all the facts of a situation
- Try to simply rescue those affected
- Brush it off as insignificant

Advice for Allies, cont.

Do:

- Say something (even if it is awkward)
- Let the affected person know that you saw/heard what happened
- Make the implicit explicit
- Ask the affected person what they think would be helpful
- Spend some of your social capital and power to make a change
- Check in with the affected person as/if the situation continues





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Thank you!

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