FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

FOREWORD REVIEW ♥♥♥♥♥ SELF-HELP

Your Boss Is Not Your Mother: Eight Steps to Eliminating Office Drama and Creating Positive Relationships at Work

Debra Mandel
Agate (May 26, 2006)
Unknown $14.00 (188pp)
978-1-932841-16-9

“No one has had the perfect childhood,” says the author. According to Mandel, not only abuse but even the unintentional inability of caregivers to meet all of a child’s needs can leave what she calls “bruises.” These unhealed “bruises” can affect workplace relationships because of transference, the projection of old feelings onto current bosses and coworkers.

Drawing on twenty years’ experience as a psychologist, Mandel describes a number of ways in which past hurts can manifest themselves. For example, one woman habitually came to work late. She hadn’t been given enough positive attention as a child and had developed the belief that she didn’t have to comply with rules like everyone else. A male patient had learned to play down his intelligence so as not to overshadow his dad. To avoid the envy of his coworkers, he still isn’t living up to his potential.

When negative patterns keep repeating themselves, the solution, Mandel says, is first to examine childhood hurts, who caused them, and their effect on one’s self-worth. Then look for physical or personality characteristics in those with whom one works that may be triggering an unconscious transference reaction and leading to involuntary or inappropriate behavior. Finally, let go of the old “stuff.”

Not all the stories have happy endings. The author gives an example of a woman who as a child was never able to please her father. Transferring her feelings onto her boss, this woman endured insults and unpaid overtime in her effort to receive his approval. After recognizing the dynamics in the situation, the woman was able to be more assertive, but she ultimately decided that she would be happier in a more supportive environment and sought another job.

Mandel concedes that merely understanding the concept of transference isn’t enough to remedy all situations. She lists several “out-of-bounds” behaviors that most people would find toxic and inappropriate in any work environment. These behaviors include verbal abuse, back-stabbing, discrimination, and physical or sexual assault. In these situations, the author advises against playing “superhero” and trying to tolerate the intolerable.

This book is aimed toward women, but the techniques are equally applicable to men. The author herself notes the main obstacle to success: “very few people … actually care about the psychology behind developing positive relationships, let alone are willing to do the work necessary.” For those who are willing, Mandel’s eight steps can be a good path to follow.
(August 18, 2009)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The author provided free copies of his/her book to have his/her book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the author for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love and make no guarantee that the author will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission’s 16 CFR, Part 255.