

## DYD Episode 86 Show Notes

### Defeat *YOUR* Drama:

#### I Have to Babysit my Coworker and Fix Her Mistakes

#### Emily from Vermont

If you'd like me to share customized strategies for your drama situation go to my website <http://podcast.defeatthedrama.com/defeat-your-drama/>. You can type or record your message. Use your real name or an alias for anonymity. Note that recorded or written messages may be used on the podcast.

#### Emily from Vermont Wrote:

I am ready to quit my job at a non profit organization I have been a part of for 23 years. I have volunteered, been on the board and have now worked here for almost 2 years. A co worker in our very small work space has been causing a lot of stress for myself and others in the company. She has had many corrective conversations and tools given to her for success that have yet to work. She denies her actions in conversations and mediation. She is extremely negative and belittling when speaking to staff, supervisors and when using work time for personal issues. She got extremely defensive and offended when she was informed her behavior was disruptive. Our meetings have now turned into ways to work better with her instead of what needs to be done for the organization. And our work has now become a constant state of babysitting and fixing mistakes due to this employee. Many events have been documented and submitted to HR. The only option I now see for myself is removing myself entirely from the situation. What other ways can we approach this issue and make this a better working environment to all those who are involved?

##

As always, In the Defeat Your Drama segments, I will provide solutions based on the information provided. I will obviously not have full details so will provide customized strategies based on what you share. Always consider your own specific circumstances before taking any action. These are suggestions not guarantees.

Emily, it sounds like you are in a tough and frustrating spot. So sorry for this! There are still some strategies that you can try. It does seem like you and your team have tried everything within your control to help her change. If she's staying then we need to identify what is still in your control.

### **#1 Make it as Small as Possible**

If your co-worker is going to stay and continue behaving the way she is then all of that is out of your control at this point. You want to stay in your job out of a passion for the non-profit's work. The goal is to see if you can make this situation at all palatable. You want to stay but can not with your current level of frustration. You can only change what you can control and your focus is something you can control.

Right now it sounds like there is a constant focus on your coworker and her negative behavior. Both from you and your team. You can't control your team but you can control you. In your mind, make her as small as possible. Put her in a circle in your mind. You can literally visual her as a tiny, tiny little being. Make her smaller and smaller and quieter and quieter. See her inside a tiny, tiny little contained circle.

Now, make the mission of the non-profit and the important work that you get to do as big as possible. In your mind visualize that getting bigger and bigger and bigger. Put it in a giant circle.

Now visualize that giant circle next to the tiny, tiny circle that contains this woman. She's a tiny little ant next to a universe.

Practice that visual.

Now, bring it into real life. In every moment you get to choose what you focus on. Everyone is in an uproar over this woman, understandably. You are sharing stories, cleaning up her messes, wishing she weren't there, wanting her to behave differently, collecting her issues, thinking about them, talking about them.

She his monopolizing your focus.

I'm not saying it will be easy, but it is doable Just STOP.

Ignore her. Make her small. Stop getting frustrated when you have to clean up her mess. I'm not saying it isn't frustrating. But the reality is whether you are focusing on it and frustrated or ignoring it she is the same. Your frustration does nothing to solve the problem anyway. Pass over that thought and move right on to the work at hand. Visualize the big difference you are making in the world through your work. Place your focus there. Place your focus where you CAN and ARE making a difference. Ignore her and her actions. Place no focus there.

## **#2 Stop Cleaning up Her Messes**

Someone is making the decision to keep her. Is this same person suffering the consequences of this co-worker's mistakes? Or, is the team doing all of the clean up. I know it is hard, especially when you feel so strongly about the work you are doing. Cushioning a decision maker from the full consequences and dealing with all of them yourselves can sometimes prolong a tough decision. Pain is what moves humans into action. If there is pain on both sides of a decision people have a

tendency to stick to the actions that create the least amount of pain or consequences.

There is a reason someone is deciding to keep this employee. I am assuming it's not about her work ethic. It sounds more like they have guilt or fear. Maybe they fear her defensive response. Perhaps they have guilt because they know she needs the job. The pain of that guilt and fear is bigger than the consequence they are experiencing from her bad behavior. Is that because you guys clean it all up so the organization does not suffer? Does the boss have to deal with the team complaints but not the clean up?

Do what you can to help decision makers feel the full brunt of consequences. Stop being on the clean up crew.

You may even tell them that you can no longer do it. You will do your job to the best of your ability but will no longer clean up her messes. You are overwhelmed, resentful and frustrated. Share what is true. What do you have to lose? You are at your wit's end. The only chance that you can stay is if something changes. Your change may be the catalyst that makes that transformation happen.

### **#3 See Her in a Different Light**

Part of your frustration is in wanting her to be different. Perhaps you assume she is doing what she's doing on purpose. Chances are the outcomes she achieves are not what she intends. Instead they are the fall out for the false beliefs, fears, lack of self esteem, whatever is actually driving her. And it might be a sense of entitlement and a desire to do as little as possible. There are some who have that mission.

The truth is, life can't be very fulfilling for her. She knows she's not doing a good job. She knows she's trying to stay stuck and hanging on by a thread where she is. She's working hard and expending a lot of energy to control what she can and keep things status quo.

I'm not trying to help you excuse away what she's doing. It is a shame. But for your own level of satisfaction and nothing more, can you feel sorry for her or find her actions ridiculously funny? Is it possible for someone to be this delusional?

If you can find humor or empathy rather than frustration the situation may begin to be more palatable. And this can help you stay in a job you otherwise love.

#### **#4 Leave**

If all else fails, you can't make the issue small and focus on other things, you can't find empathy or humor, you can't ignite the desire for change in the leaders by allowing them to feel the consequences. If the frustration is at a level that you can no longer tolerate then the option for your sanity and enjoyment of life is to leave. Use your gifts and all that you have to offer to an organization that values hard work and a focus where it should be. An organization that does not tolerate drama.

It is possible that your resignation would ignite a fire in the leaders who are allowing the behavior to continue. I wouldn't suggest giving an idle threat but if you are truly at that point and find no other options let the leaders know. And maybe, just maybe, they'll do what they must.