

Whether in a private club, career, political arena, community or even church organization, if you have a nagging suspicion that you've been blackballed, there's a pretty good chance you have. Here are five sure-fire ways to effectively and efficiently deflate the ill effects of this invisible nemesis.

For starters, blackballing is not to be confused with public ridiculing or open slandering. In the political arena or even at a comedy house, mudslingers and hecklers are quickly identified. The heckler actually wants the center-stage; they want the video tape to roll; they thrive on attention. These brash and staunchly opinionated opponents posture their own truths by brazenly challenging anyone who should differ. They continuously gab and blab because they want to be heard by all that want to listen, and even those who would rather tune them out.

Quite the opposite, however, is the blackballer. The blackballer more often operates surreptitiously, not wanting to be discovered. Therefore, their prey are aware they've been blackballed, yet only have suspicion and circumstantial evidence about the culprit. As a result, the victim grieves over the misdeeds, but usually says or does nothing out of concern for being labeled accusatory, overly-sensitive, extreme or even paranoid.

However, here are your five tips to take the steam out of the blackballer's engine, and perhaps even obliterate the effects of blackballing:

1. **Start-up, Own-up, Fess-up, and Make It Right:** Begin with winning the game [yes, it's ugly, but it is a cowardly game -- more about the profile of the blackballer in a minute]. You win the game of blackballing by starting with self-inspection and self-reflection. Be brutally honest with yourself by considering your words spoken, decisions made, and actions taken. If you did or said nothing wrong, accusatory, defamatory, slanderous, manipulative, harmful, etc. your hands are clean. You still win because you first examined yourself.

Conversely, if you started "it" own "it". Take responsibility for what you instigated. Identify and acknowledge your part in the perpetual cycle of roadblocks to achieving your hopes, desires, business deals, opportunities, and the like. When you accept what you actually and factually did to instigate being blackballed, you will be better able to accept the consequences of your words and actions. Ownership also stirs up your internal fortitude to persevere through rejection and disappointments. Owning "it" will be your impetus to building the mental, emotional and spiritual muscle to endure shut doors, unreturned phone calls and ostracism. As you persist, you will even become stronger in your willingness and decisions to change relationships, jobs, social groups, churches and even your place of residence. This, however, is not about running from a situation. Keep in mind, if you have not first dealt with

self, even running to Siberia will not change your state of mind or the emotional condition of your heart.

Next, after acknowledging and accepting your part in it, fess-up! Confess without an inkling of an excuse as to why you said or did, what you said or did. Decide and choose the right time and setting to meet with your blackballer to present not only your sincere apology, but your attempt to make the situation right. If meeting with him is not possible [i.e., they don't want to meet with you; they intentionally avoid you] consider writing a genuine letter of apology, and a request or offer a suggestion on how to repair the situation. A candid confession coupled with a genuine offer to make amends demonstrates a mature and willing heart and mindset. These actions are also self-evident of your level and degree of unforgiveness.

Warning: Confessing and making amends are best done when there is the highest level of certainty or perhaps substantial proof in naming your blackballer. Continually chasing down and apologizing to any and every one you think might have “done you wrong” only demonstrates you have a persecution complex. This weakens the likelihood of having any apology accepted; and might actually result in further exacerbating the situation and getting plenty of doors slammed in your face.

Another Warning: Chances are extremely slim that you will ever definitively identify your nemesis. Remember, your blackballer is not your flamboyant rival that wants to openly duke-it-out and resolve issues of conflict. On the contrary, she operates clandestinely and does not want to be found out. The blackballer is a pro at “throwing the rock and hiding her hand.” Therefore, do not become overly confident that you’ll “find” your blackballer or that she would be willing to have a sit-down with you if you should locate her.

Nonetheless, do your part. Start with self and the mind set of owning your words and actions. This could potentially lead to squashing the matter and clearing any barricades to your advancement. This is your formula to winning!

2. **Understand the Profile of a Blackballer:** So who is the blackballer and why does he not reveal himself like a heckler or mudslinger? More likely than not, the blackballer is someone in position of authority and power, and/or has a broad circle of control and influence. The blackballer may very well be the retaliator when someone has filed a complaint directly against them, their business, their company, their family, etc. On the other hand, the blackballer may be someone with thousands of social media friends and email contacts.

More than likely the blackballer is scholastically accomplished and intelligent, and knows his blackballing antics are unscrupulous and would undoubtedly backfire if he was exposed. Therefore, remaining under the radar is the essential framework for all his blackballing activities.

In public, the blackballer may present a loving, fair, and polished ideal image. Beneath the exterior, however, the blackballer might be entrenched in bitterness, jealousy, anger, gossip and unforgiveness. The blackballer's mission is to avenge their perceived wrongdoer either directly or through the handy-work of others. .

Having a clearer understanding of the profile of the blackballer empowers you to press on, and identify that you are simply stronger and braver than they. Therefore, although you might be or have been blackballed, never seek to replicate the style of a blackballer or handle matters by taking retaliatory measures. There's no winning in the eye-for-an-eye, tooth-for-a-tooth conflict resolution approach. Instead, rise above the unsavory style of the blackballer. Choose to deal with candor, openness, integrity, patience, self-control and honesty in all your personal and business matters. Knowing yourself and having these honorable rules of engagement will help build and reinforce your reputation.

3. **Know it's a Team Effort:** Understand that while the blackballer is the source of the duplicitous activity, she is not working alone. The blackballer may have a few or many employees, partners, agents, members, and friends working in tandem. These "team members" are the messengers and executors of the blackballer's dastardly deeds. The deeds may be subtle yet significantly impactful to the subject. A contemptuous smirk, a verbal smear, a discrediting whisper, a straight out lie, and stream of gossip are all tactics to bring about the demise of the blackballer's subject. And it's actions such as these that will be replicated by the blackballer's band of followers.

This becomes evident when members of the blackballer's camp that were once professional, friendly, kind or even indifferent toward you, now avoid, whisper, ostracize, or react negatively toward you. Unfortunately, individuals acting on behalf of the blackballer may unknowingly be carrying out their assignment. They may not have a clue, or the time or interest in discovering truths or facts about the subject. They are following directives and replicating conduct initiated by their influencer --the person they hold in high regard.

On the other hand, agents of the blackballer that are aware of their assignment, may thrive on their alignment and association they have with the blackballer and choose to view the conduct as right, justified or as human or natural. The blackballer's handmaidens (male and female) may even choose to carry out the dirt based on their own interests and motives -- ranging anywhere from desiring acceptance, wanting to be on the team, feeling empowered, needing security of the blackballer, and the list goes on.

The blackballer's team might consist of two, 200 or 20,000. Whatever the number, this is clear indication that the blackballer is hiding behind their "team" and is intimidated by their subject. If the blackballer did not fear his subject, he would deal one-on-one, eye-to-eye and toe-to-toe. There would be no need to enlist a team to do the work of one. Being aware of this

should be another confidence-builder for anyone that has been experiencing the ill effects of being blackballed. Understanding this should mentally, emotionally, and spiritually energize you to continue to move forward with your life activities. Your blackballer sees you as a giant against him. He needs not only his big brother to fight his battle, but the entire organization, city, state or country to subdue you on his behalf. Extreme? Yes indeed! You're operating solo, yet you intimidate the blackballer to the degree where he "must" enlist an army to fight his fight. Certainly this realization should give you strength to withstand the craft of blackballing.

4. **Stay Focused On Your Life Priorities and Purpose.** This can be particularly challenging if you've been on a job-hunt for months, or even years, and you've repeatedly gotten to the final round of interviews or even the job offer stage where reference checks are being conducted and suddenly there's nothing. Not even a verbal reply from the interviewer or hiring manager, who you've become well-acquainted with. Or you receive a generic decline letter indicating a more qualified candidate has been selected, or that the company is continuing their candidate search. Even attempts to contact the interviewers to find out what knowledge, skills, and abilities you lack are unrequited. When your prospective employer has just about given you the office keys, and this scenario has played out three or more times, the flashing "blackball" sign is likely to repeatedly blink. Chances are your blackballer executed his assignment, or one or more of his deployed agents have dropped the bomb.

As disappointing or nerve-racking as this occurrence may be, keep your situation in perspective and remain focused on your ultimate goal – your life purpose. It's absolutely appropriate to assess and reassess what just happened, ask the whys and what you could have done differently in positioning yourself as the candidate-of-choice. However, make the conscious decision to shake-it-off, and keep-it-moving. Your gifts and talents are necessary, needed and will be valued in the marketplace. Perhaps not with whom you were hopeful, but with whom they are supposed to. Take a deep breath, exhale, and press on. Feeling defeated is much too taxing and will deflate your energy level...instead of deflating the blackballer. This is also a reminder not to put your hopes in a particular company, person, place or thing. You may be limiting yourself in what you can accomplish and offer the world, not one person or one company. If your priority is to secure a new career opportunity, focusing on the blackballer wastes your time and energy in attaining your next job. This might very well be the signal that it's your time to stretch beyond your comfort zone. Maybe you should consider exploring new career waters, charting a new course in life, sharing your time as volunteer, or venturing into entrepreneurship. Consider taking a day off from your job hunt to complete a personalized skill and interest *assessment, or decide to complete a **life purpose course. Most important, know with great confidence your life and livelihood are not locked up in a single person, company, industry, organization, or state. That's much too limiting. Know with vim and vigor that you are

a package with knowledge, talents, skills and abilities. And you have a unique life purpose that must and shall be fulfilled. Therefore, take your eye off the seed so that you can see the orchard. Take your eyes off the rearview mirror and place your eyes in the direction of your front windshield. Your best is ahead of you. Do not be “person-focused,” but stayed “purpose-focused.”

5. **Release Others from Your Values:** Perhaps when deciding to join a company, social organization, team, networking group, or church/ministry you were overly thrilled about their product, service, mission and vision. However, what you did not consider was the values of the organization. Now you’re fully engaged in operating, working, serving and you see that the style and behaviors of those you work with are not in alignment with yours. You spend time sharing your thoughts and recommendations about how things could and should be done, but consistently there’s a rub, conflict and discord. You’re right, and they’re wrong, or vice versa. Well, frankly, something has got to change or someone has got to go. And likely you will be the one that must do the packing. Undoubtedly if your values are in conflict with the man or woman in charge you might as well write your own ticket out. So make the decision, sooner rather than later, either release people from your value standards or release yourself from the relationship. Do not waste precious time trying to change the styles, conduct, behaviors and personalities of others – [their values] – it’s a waste of your time, energy, and peace of mine.

Regardless how knowledgeable you are or that fact that you have the silver bullet to eliminating every problem or trial a person, church or company has, you must decide to either “love ‘em or leave ‘em” as they are.

Most people, perhaps all people, have a set of values they staunchly uphold. Likely there are four to six personal values that you regularly talk about, wear as badges of honor, and even exude. Perhaps one or more of your values is framed and on your wall, or is the headliner of your Facebook page or personal website. Recognize there are hundreds of different values. And the ranking, weight and importance placed on each value will differ person-to-person. Since your values will exude from your personality, life priorities, decisions and preferences, your self-awareness is essential.

Synergy in relationships help fuel productivity and performance. Without cohesion and synergy there’s little to no loyalty. Therefore beyond even knowledge, skills and abilities, leadership will make decisions whether to strike a business deal or retain a team member. Have you ever wondered why some team members seem to get away with “stuff”, are not as productive, efficient or effective? However, what they do have is sponsorship and relationship with those that make decisions whether to keep or release team members. By closer examination you will likely find the relationship exists because there are common values.

If you’re convinced you’ve been blackballed, consider whether there was a-disconnect or misalignment of values. For instance, you may value teamwork and collaboration, your blackballer may

value independence and self-initiative. You may value humility, your blackballer may value pride. You may value innovation, your blackballer may value tradition. You may value drug-free living, your blackballer may value legalizing marijuana.

What you will have to resolve is that your personal values are not right or wrong, yet they might be different from those of your blackballer...as well as others in your environment. Your power however, is identifying when the differences exist, and deciding whether to release others from your standards, or releasing yourself from the relationship that's causing you the grief. Be kind to yourself and be empowered to make that decision to release others or release yourself.

At times the person subjected to being blackballed might want to strike out and strike back. However, never be lured into becoming a blackballer. Remember: regardless of how things may appear on the surface, a blackballer always turns out to be the biggest loser. Further, the irony of being blackballed is the intended victim actually controls the game and antics of blackballing. The power is in deciding how you will view each situation and who you truly believe is in control of the events that are transpiring in your life. It's not about denying that adverse events are taking place at the hands of one or many. However, it is about consciously choosing to acknowledge, believe and claim your rightful and winning position.

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