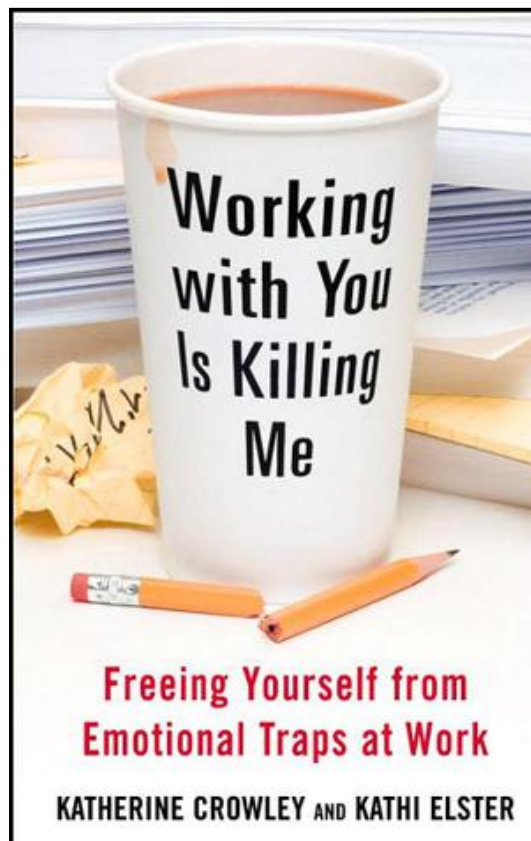


Freeing Yourself from Emotional Traps at Work  
**Working With You is Killing Me**



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국내 미출간 세계 베스트셀러(NBS) 서비스는 (주)네오넷코리아가 해외에서 저작권자와의 저작권 계약을 통해, 영미권, 일본, 중국의 경제·경영 및 정치 서적의 베스트셀러, 스테디셀러의 핵심 내용을 간략하게 정리한 요약(Summary) 정보입니다. 저작권법에 의하여 (주)네오넷코리아의 정식인가 없이 무단전재, 무단복제 및 전송을 할 수 없으며, 모든 출판권과 전송권은 저작권자에게 있음을 알려드립니다.

## **Working With You is Killing Me**

### **Freeing Yourself from Emotional Traps at Work**

#### **The Big Idea**

In a perfect world, businesses would run as they were presented in company brochures and portfolios-- performing as lean, mean, profit-making machines, with all its departments and people united as one mind, moving towards a single goal. But this is hardly a perfect world, and in reality, an office setting is often far from being serene. It is a mix of personalities and working styles which sometimes clash, creating friction between people and often creating problems for the company as well.

Because the workplace is such a volatile mix of elements that are often beyond an individual's control, it is impossible to never to have encountered a person who pushes your buttons. The resulting tension between you and this person is most likely to interfere with productivity, and since you are unable to reprogram them or delete them from your work experience, you're more likely to sulk and stress about it, with negative results. If left unsolved, this often leads to the loss of productivity, and in the end, it may even cost you the job that you love.

In *Working With You Is Killing Me*, you are taught to take control of the situation, change your outlook and responses to the situation in order to be able to handle it in the most professional way possible.

#### **About the Author**

Katherine Crowley · Kathi Elster - Katherine Crowley, a Harvardtrained psychotherapist, and Kathi Elster, a former sales executive and nationally recognized small business expert, are the authors of *Working With You Is Killing Me*. Relevant for bosses and employees, Elster and Crowley analyze workplace relationships to break down the conflict and work it out.

The book was written in an 8' by 15' room, also known as Katherine's therapy room. Even though they began each writing session with just the two of them, as they started working, the room began to fill with people from their past. Among the visitors were their own workplace ghosts. Elster's history included an alcoholic boss, a drug dealing, womanizing colleague, and a saboteur business partner, while Crowley's past featured a charismatic pedestal smasher, an exploding CEO, and several empty pit co-workers.

## Getting Hooked

You know you're hooked when you find yourself upset and distracted by another person's behavior, so much so that it begins to have adverse effects on you. For example, if you dread seeing a colleague in the pantry, knowing that she'll try to unload all the latest, juiciest gossip into your unwilling ears; or when your heart begins to pound in a deer-in-the-headlights type of way when your boss' number flashes on your phone at three in the morning; or when you begin to develop a migraine when a whiny client calls for the fifth "emergency" meeting of the week.

There are many signs that let you know that you're hooked, and they fall into three categories: physical, mental and emotional. Physical signs manifest as your body reacts to the stressors. You may experience pain or discomfort such as headaches, backaches, chest pains, a stiff neck, muscle spasms, nausea, insomnia or fatigue. Mental signs of being hooked include obsessive thinking, spacing out, revenge fantasies, and an inability to concentrate. Finally, samples of emotional signs are feelings of inadequacy, of being overwhelmed, anxiety, or anger.

When you're hooked, someone else has power over you. In order to regain control of the situation, you need to take stock of your reactions, find out what's causing them specifically, and learn to deal with the situation in a professional manner. Realizing when you've gotten hooked and what triggers your reactions is the first important step in freeing yourself from a harmful work environment.

## Unhooking

Unhooking is the process whereby you take back control of the situation by changing your reaction to the situation. It's a four-step system that gives you tools to manage yourself and helps you take charge of your situation.

### The Four Steps of Unhooking

- **Unhooking Physically.** This refers to any healthy way of releasing pent-up negative energy in the body. You can use calming and grounding techniques such as taking five minutes for meditation and quiet, breathing exercises, or stretching exercises. If you can, take a brisk walk around the building, or up and down the stairwell. If pressed for time, you could simply go to the restroom and splash cold water on your face. If time is on your side, go running, or to the gym, or shoot a few hoops. This step usually clears the air for the next step.
- **Unhooking Mentally .** This consists of replaying the scenario in your mind and seeing it from a less involved perspective. It also involves asking yourself a series of questions that will help you figure things out.

- ✓ What's happening here?
- ✓ What are the facts of the situation?
- ✓ What's their part?
- ✓ What's my part?
- ✓ What are my options?

When answering these questions, stick to the facts and be as unemotional as possible.

- **Unhooking Verbally.** This involves choosing the words that will help to communicate your stand on something but will not perpetuate or aggravate the problem. For example, instead of saying "Can't you do anything right?" which sounds accusatory and attacking, try saying "We need to create a system for quality control."
- **Unhooking with a Business Tool.** You can make use of any number of business tools to take the situation out of the emotional and personal realm and fix it firmly in the professional arena. Here are some of the tools at your disposal:
  - ✓ Job descriptions
  - ✓ Employee goals and expectations
  - ✓ Performance reviews
  - ✓ Policies and procedures
  - ✓ Disciplinary action forms
  - ✓ Memos, emails, letters, and other forms of written correspondence
  - ✓ Meeting agendas
  - ✓ Documentation

### **General Hooks**

These are the most common issues that one finds oneself in. These hooks cover the whole workplace in general, and may or may not be limited to an interaction between two people.

### **Boundaries**

Setting boundaries or limits is an essential step in being able to work efficiently. If you are continually angry or upset over something or someone, you probably need to set a boundary. By definition, boundaries are parameters that define territory and protect its inhabitants, and setting them can be tricky. Remember that whenever you set boundaries, you are often called on to maintain them. Be firm, and don't send mixed signals or you may find yourself in a more confusing situation than what you started with.

Common areas that require the setting of boundaries include:

- **Time.** People differ in their perception of time, and because of this, time is an area where boundaries must be clearly defined. Using the unhooking system, let your boss know that handing in two hours worth of work ten minutes before you clock out isn't something to be done on a regular basis, or remind employees that lunch breaks are only one hour, max.
- **Personal Space.** Personal space within an office can be tricky, because while a space may be assigned to you, it is not yours. Still it is wise to let other people know what your ideas of personal space are. You may also have rules regarding these, but make sure that these are not unreasonable, offensive, or hindering other people from doing their job.
- **Keeping your word.** Whether it's agreeing to deadlines or promising deliveries to clients, one must value the worth of their promises. This is also an area where people differ a lot. Some people may see it as a simple thing to forget that they promised to call you at a certain time, while you may see it as a serious breach of etiquette.
- **Personal Info.** Overshare can be uncomfortable for a lot of people, so know what your officemates are comfortable with knowing about you. On the other hand, you must also make it clear how much of your personal life you're willing to share, and how much you can take knowing about their lives as well.
- **Emotional Expression.** Unrestrained emotional outbursts in a workplace could be seen as unprofessional by some people, but others may perceive it as simply living unpretentiously. Sometimes bosses have to step in and set boundaries about excessive emotionality at work, in order to maintain the professionalism of the place of work.
- **Manners / Courtesy / Etiquette.** Not everyone's on the same page when it comes to the basic niceties of interacting with other human beings. Some people feel that it's only right to greet co-workers 'good morning' or 'good afternoon', while others don't consider this a waste of their time.
- **Noise.** People have different levels of noise sensitivity or noise comfort. Most offices have a standard noise level, but sometimes individuals can cross the line without being reprimanded, like a noisy officemate whose voice distracts you from your work.

### **Breaking The Mold**

Another common scenario is when you find yourself forced to fit a role that is detrimental either to other aspects of your life or to your work itself. For example, if people continually expect you to cover for them at work, or if they expect you to pick up the slack for everyone, you may find yourself feeling frustrated and taken advantage of.

You may have unwittingly created this situation by continuing to allow people to cast you in this role, but once you realize the harm it's doing you, you could easily break the cycle by unhooking yourself from the process.

Here is a list of a few of the confining roles that employees find themselves in:

**The Hero.** This individual is the superhero of the workplace. Usually resourceful and competent, he'll work all hours, forsake vacation and sick days, and do whatever it takes to meet a deadline or bag a client. Unfortunately, when you're hooked into being a hero, you can never say no, and you feel pressured to "save the day" each time something goes wrong, whether or not it's something you're involved in. You can get swamped with more work than is humanly possible, and eventually, it can even take a toll on your personal life.

#### Unhooking Tips for Heroes

- Learn to say no.
- Stop doing business during the off hours.
- Learn to delegate tasks – give people a chance to step up to the plate.

**The Caretaker.** This individual is the universal shoulder to cry on. She ends up feeling responsible for, and tries to solve, everybody's problems. Being a caretaker can be a hook when you find yourself making excuses for people, and being unable to hold them for their actions professionally.

#### Unhooking Tips for Caretakers

- Set boundaries on what co-workers tell you about their personal lives.
- Refrain from covering up for under-functioning coworkers.
- Stop making excuses for people based on their personal issues.

**The Rebel / Scapegoat.** The rebel is someone who is non-conformist and usually has no trouble with ruffling feathers or making waves. This can, however, impair people's perception of him, and more often than not, this person's suggestions and comments are dismissed as simply another effort to cause trouble.

#### Unhooking Tips for Rebels and Scapegoats

- Practice impulse control and think before you speak.
- When people in authority make decisions you don't agree with, wait and think on it a bit before going off on them.
- Try to find someone you trust and have them read over memos and emails that you wish to send to get a touchy point across, so that he or she can tell you if

it's too strongly worded.

**The Martyr.** Martyrs are willing to give blood, sweat and tears for a company, doing favors for co-workers and helping out on projects that are not their own, and expect to be rewarded. However, they never speak up to point out their achievements and contributions. As a result, they may be bypassed for the expected rewards. While this usually makes the martyr feel overlooked and neglected, but it doesn't inspire him or her to ask for recognition-- they just work harder, perpetuating the cycle.

#### Unhooking Tips for Martyrs

- Reduce the amount of favors you do around the workplace.
- Rather than suffer in silence, learn to ask for what you want.
- Reduce the ways people can contact you outside of office hours-- turn your beeper or cell phone off after hours.

**The Entertainer.** Extremely good-natured and good with people, entertainers tend to diffuse serious situations with humor. However, this leads to people not taking them seriously.

#### Unhooking Tips for Entertainers

- Try taking a more serious approach to your career.
- When you feel the need to crack a joke in tense situations, restrain yourself and say nothing.
- Practice directly asking for something instead of turning it into a joke or apology.
- Be ready to trade popularity for respect.

**The Peacemaker.** An eternal pacifist, Peacemakers will say or do anything to keep the peace, but such an approach often makes them look weak in the eyes of others, and if the peacemaker is a person of authority, this may cause serious problems.

#### Unhooking Tips for Peacemakers

- State what you want even if you won't be liked because of it.
- When conflicts do not involve you, avoid mediating.
- Learn to express your point of view clearly and without hedging.

**The Invisible One.** This type of employee keeps below the radar. As a result, he or she may be bypassed for promotions, or may be ignored when opinions are asked for.

#### Unhooking Tips for Invisible Ones



- Attend meetings, conferences, and the like.
- Be willing to speak your mind around co-workers.

### **Fatal Attractions**

There are types of co-workers or peers who go to the extreme, and no matter of tact or diplomacy will save you. Sadly, these people are good at hooking you and getting you to react to them emotionally, exploiting the relationship between you to your detriment. Working with these people could actually “kill” you, and you need to take steps towards self-preservation.

The five most common fatal attractions are: The Exploder, The Empty Pit, The Saboteur, The Pedestal Smasher, and The Chip on the Shoulder.

- **The Exploder.** Outbursts, loud and sometimes violent, are the mark of an exploder. They frighten those around them, and you know that you are hooked when you go through every day trying to avoid another blowup.
- **The Empty Pit.** These people usually hook caregivers. They are very needy, making unrealistic demands on your time and attention.
- **The Saboteur.** A very dangerous fatal attraction, this person pretends to be a friend, a fan of your work, and then he begins to undermine you. He or she may begin to spread rumors about you and cause others to question your abilities. This person may cause you to feel inept, unsafe, and constantly on the defensive.
- **The Pedestal Smasher.** This person builds you up by praising you and your work, and then later on tears you down by being unrelentingly and unreasonably critical.
- **The Chip On the Shoulder.** Commonly a talented person who seems to only need a break to get ahead, this person always seems to believe the world owes him something. You are torn between cutting him some slack and cutting him off to avoid his defensive, and sometimes caustic, personality.

### **7 Stages of the Fatal Attraction Cycle**

1. **Magnetism** - the initial attraction to the person.
2. **Consumption** - the person begins to exhibit some signs of unpleasant behavior.
3. **Rehearsal and Recovery** - you spend all your time trying to prepare for and recover from interactions with the said person.
4. **Conversation Obsession** - you become obsessed with the person, willing and hoping for them to change and return to the person to whom you had been initially drawn to.



5. Post-Interactive Heartburn - eventually, interactions with this person leave you feeling distraught, drained, or depressed. You begin to show signs of emotional fatigue.
6. Allergic Reaction- you begin to experience involuntary bodily reactions to the person, your head begins to ache, or your muscles tighten; sure signs of stress.
7. Imprisonment - you are now a prisoner of war. You begin to feel bitter and resentful of the other person, and feel trapped in the situation.

### **Dealing With Fatal Attractions**

Because Fatal Attractions are so extreme, the basic four-step unhooking procedure isn't enough. Fatal Attractions require advanced unhooking techniques, which are also comprised of four steps:

Step 1: Detect - Before anything can be treated, it has to be diagnosed. Learn to read your body for signs of undue stress. Knowing your body's alarm signals will help you identify if you're trapped in a toxic business relationship.

Step 2: Detach - Mentally condition yourself. You must accept that the person is not going to change, that the relationship will never be the way it was, and that you will probably never reap the benefits that you believed you would have in pursuing the relationship.

Step 3: Depersonalize - Realize that the person's behavior is not about you.

Step 4: Deal - Devise a strategy that will remedy the situation. Sometimes it only involves being okay enough to come to work with this person and doing your best while looking for another job. During this step, you go through the basic unhooking steps, unhooking physically, mentally, verbally, and with a business tool.

### **Surviving Your Supervisors**

What if it's your boss that's driving you crazy? There are ways and means to manage your managers - and have them thanking you in the end.

### **Managing Up - Taking Control**

Most employees expect managers to be the epitome of efficiency, and expect to either be told what to do or allowed to do what they know is right, with the manager on the ball all the time. However, managers are only human, and unfortunately, most managers are promoted not because they have great managing skills, but because they did a great job as an employee, or because of politics, or even simply because of seniority.

Sometimes being at the top can be overwhelming, and every manager appreciates someone on his or her team who can handle situations well.

### **Five Pivotal Practices of Managing Up**

These are practices to help manage your workplace hand in hand with your superior without overstepping your authority. By taking responsibility for improving the relationship, you make things easier for everyone involved - especially yourself.

**Pivotal Practice #1:** Train your boss to meet with you regularly.

Learn to set meetings with your boss at a time that is convenient for him or her. Be persistent as well as consistent, knowing that your boss is just as eager to know what's happening with your projects but can hardly be expected to ask you for a meeting.

**Pivotal Practice #2:** Come to every meeting with a detailed agenda.

This is a good practice for those with managers who have a tendency to wander. It avoids time wastage, and allows you to focus on the important things that need to be addressed.

**Pivotal Practice #3:** Keep a pulse on your boss' changing priorities.

A manager's schedule changes all the time, and it's up to you to keep track of it. Realize that sometimes, emergencies arise, and it's up to you to rise to the challenge and help out.

**Pivotal Practice #4:** Anticipate problems and offer solutions.

Sometimes you can solve a problem even before it happens. When your copier is making strange noises, for example, requesting a technician to see what's wrong with it before the machine breaks down completely saves everyone a lot of hassle. You can also practice this by confirming appointments, replenishing supplies, or just keeping tabs on deliveries sent via courier.

**Pivotal Practice #5:** Always be prepared to give a status report on your projects.

Keeping tabs on your own projects is important, and by keeping written records, you have everything at the tip of your fingers whenever it's called for.

### **Managing Up's High Five**

These are advanced practices that create standards of excellence within the workplace, and show dedication and drive.

- Be on time or early for the start of your day.
- Be a gatekeeper and keep away unwanted time-eaters.
- Create systems so others can find things when you're not around.

- Keep confidential information where it belongs.
- Underpromise and overdeliver.

### **Difficult and Extreme Bosses – Handle With Care**

Learn to differentiate difficult bosses from extreme bosses -- the former simply does things differently, while the latter is toxic.

Difficult Bosses are easily handled with the four basic steps of unhooking, but Extreme Bosses should be handled like Fatal Attractions - using the four advanced steps before basic unhooking.

#### **Kinds of Difficult Bosses and How to Handle Them**

- **The Avoider.** This boss fears confrontation and will hedge, dodge and delay to avoid causing a stir. They'll promise action and procrastinate until the problem worsens and forces them to take action, which is usually too little too late. The trick for handling this boss is to craft a solution yourself in the process of unhooking, but keep your boss informed every step of the way.
- **The Shoot The Messenger.** This boss blasts anyone who delivers any negative kind of information. They're avoiders in disguise, but instead of procrastinating, they become angry. This reaction is usually elicited in response to information which they can't fully comprehend. To handle this boss, deliver negative news in small amounts, and set up a system to help them understand what it means.
- **The Sacred Cow.** This person fears being exposed as incompetent, and is usually in his position due to seniority or politics. These people are usually likeable, but will resist change at all costs. To handle this boss, make sure to convey respect and support as you encourage forward movement.
- **The Charming Cheating Liar.** This boss closes deals at all costs, whether or not his team can deliver. The trick to handling this boss is to learn his language. Trade favors, and make them realize you and others on his team are the ones meeting his unreasonable demands to fulfill his promises.

#### **Kinds of Extreme Bosses and How To Handle Them**

Usually, to deal with an extreme boss, you need to be able to realize you cannot win with them. You aren't the first to suffer at their hand, and you won't be the last. Unhooking enables you to relax, function, and let go enough to circulate your CV.

- **The Controlling Egomaniac.** These people are usually the star of their own show, a self-made man or woman who has catapulted themselves into fame. Trouble happens when you begin to threaten this person's fame by performing

outstandingly as well. This guy will do everything to keep you down.

- The Absentee. Never around when you need them, these people are usually those who have had the position of leader thrust upon them, much to their resentment. They will leave you stranded in the lurch with no authority to turn to and let the business and/or your team run into ruin.
- The Unpleaseable. You could give this boss the sun, the moon and the stars and it will never be enough, but they're not above asking for it. You'll continually go the extra mile, but they'll never be satisfied.
- The Credit Stealer. These bosses steal every bit of credit and recognition from their team for themselves. People who need even a little bit of recognition will wilt under this person's thumb like flowers deprived of light and feel demotivated, frustrated, and abused.

### Business Parenting

Managers often find themselves in the difficult role of parents to their staff, and it's a reasonable conclusion that anyone who oversees the work of other people inevitably ends up in a parenting position. In doing so, the person in charge must step back, look at the bigger picture, and take steps to correct the situation.

#### Four Key Principles To Business Parenting

Principle #1: Employees need to know exactly what is expected of them.

Parents need to provide structure, and managers need to know how to let their employees know what is expected of them. They need to know what their job is, what expectations come with the job, and what the rules and standards are for behavior within the office.

Principle #2: Employees need consistent feedback.

Like kids, employees need to know when they're doing something right as well as something wrong. People need reward as well as punishment, and there should be repercussions for negative behavior and rewards for positive ones.

Principle #3: Employees will test their environment.

It's the nature of people to push their limits, and managers must be prepared to reinforce policies again and again. Managers should be persistent, consistent, and repetitive.

Principle #4: Business tools are a manager's best friends.

Families have house rules, while businesses have business tools. These can be used by managers to support their decisions and actions.

## Supervisory “Shoulds” To Look Out For

These are “shoulds” that managers hold in their minds and prevent them from proper parenting. As a manager, one has to know to let go of these, and using the basic unhooking process is helpful in doing this in order to find remedies to difficult employee behavior.

1. I should only have to say it once.

The problem with this is that behavior cannot be changed after only being told once. You must be prepared to reinforce new policies repeatedly until it becomes a habit.

2. They should behave the way I do.

Unfortunately, people don't think alike, and your employees aren't you. Once you come to this realization, it'll be easier to accept your employee's different ways of doing things as long as they get similar results.

3. They shouldn't make mistakes.

People learn new things in the course of making mistakes. Employees need to be able to explore different methods in their search for results without fear of retribution. Sometimes accidents and mistakes are opportunities in disguise, and people need a chance to make them.

4. I shouldn't have to be their parent.

Unfortunately, this expectation is simply unrealistic, and you need to accept that you will be placed again and again in a parenting position.

5. They should know how to prioritize their work.

Employees doing nonessential tasks at work may frustrate a manager, but again, you have to remind them repeatedly and consistently of their duties.

6. They should know what I need.

Hardly any people are employed based on their mind-reading skills. Effective communication is key in letting your employees know what you need from them.

7. They should like and appreciate me.

Being a manager and being popular are often two totally unrelated things. Be ready to accept that some of your decisions may make you unpopular, but they have to be made.

8. They should know that I appreciate them.

Again, communication is key. Know how to acknowledge, reward, and recognize your staff.

9. They should get along with one another.

There is almost never a perfect mix of personalities in a single office. They may not like each other, but it's part of your job that they at least treat each other civilly to get their jobs done.

10. They shouldn't challenge me.

Challenging employees are positive contributor to office dynamics. Don't be too quick to judge that any person who challenges you is just a troublemaker.

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