



DECEMBER 2021

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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Andreea Hill—Kilkenny Law, LLC

Jennifer Dobbins—Kilkenny Law, LLC

Jessica Damico—Montgomery County District Attorney's Office

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- ◇ Obtain the annual MCPA Membership Directory;
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- ◇ Subscription to the National Paralegal Reporter, the official bi-monthly magazine of the NFPA;
- ◇ Network with paralegals and other members of the legal community; and
- ◇ Stay on top of local and national trends in your career! Join MCPA today by visiting

[www.MCPA -BECOME A MEMBER.org](http://www.MCPA-BECOME A MEMBER.org)

Upcoming Continuing Legal Education Classes

JANUARY 25

6:30-8:15PM

INDUCTION CEREMONY

Presented by the Honorable Daniel J. Clifford

CLE/MEDICAID

Presented by Rosemary Ferrino (Elder Law)

FEBRUARY 10

12-1pm

CLE/7 Habits of the Indispensable Paralegal

Presented by Ann Pearson (founder of paralegal bootcamp)

ATTENTION

Credential Renewal Reminder

**NFPA PACE Registered Paralegals
NFPA CRP Certified Registered Paralegals
Pa.C.P. Credentialed Paralegals**

***Are your Credentials expiring in
DECEMBER, JANUARY, OR FEBRUARY?***

NOW is the time to submit your renewal application and proof of CLE.

For more information, visit:

RP and CRP – www.paralegals.org or Pa.C.P. – www.keystoneparalegals.org

Paralegal Life: Working For A Difficult Boss

By Mary Mendoza

Tips for Improving the Situation When You Work for a Difficult Boss

As paralegals, we often get difficult cases and even more difficult opposing counsel. However, when your boss is more difficult than either of those, it is time to reflect on the situation and what can be done to make the predicament better.

We all know that paralegals work in an industry where stress is par for the course. We deal with deadlines, court rules, and client demands, adding to daily pressures to perform. But, sometimes, that stress is ongoing because it comes from working with a difficult boss. This difficult boss can be an attorney, office manager, or maybe even a paralegal manager. Sometimes it is just a co-worker who is a bit on the bossy side. But, no matter who the person is, we need to find ways to maneuver through the difficulties and work with the person I shall call "Bossy Pants."

In my career as a paralegal, as well as an educator, I have faced many difficult individuals and supervisors. On more than one occasion, I have found myself paired

with attorneys (or other supervisors) who have gone through multiple employees prior to my hiring. And, you guessed it, I did not find out until after I was hired that the individual I was hired to work for was the company Bossy Pants. I have also experienced being hired on to a firm only to have a switch in attorney support. Because of that shakeup, I was assigned to an attorney who had been through many paralegals and legal assistants in a short period of time.

Instead of exploding and reacting negatively, here are several ways that I have used when working through those difficult situations and coming out on top.

Paralegal Life: 8 Tips for Paralegals When You Work for a Difficult Boss:

Take a breath

One of the easiest things to do is take a deep breath. It may not solve the issue at hand, but it will allow your body the ability to relax, even if for a few minutes. Now, I do not mean the audible *huff* which can signal your annoyance and frustration to Bossy Pants and escalate the situation.

See pg. 4.

Let the person walk away, then close your eyes and breathe. Better yet, find a quiet place if you do not have your own office. Take a few minutes away from the person or incident to breathe, let your body relax, and gather your thoughts.

Brush it off

I have found that what works for me is just brushing it off. What is the phrase – like water off of duck’s back? Sometimes the best thing you can do is just let things go. I start each day with fresh eyes and a fresh perspective. Positive self-talk is used often, and I remind myself that I should not take the behaviors personally. By brushing things off, I do not let the situation weigh on me nor cause my usually chipper demeanor to sour.

Listen

I have learned over the years that people just want to be heard and feel that their issues and concerns matter. This may mean you have to refrain from speaking back to the person. This can be difficult when what you really want to do is explain your side of the story or respond. Just take that deep breath and allow Bossy Pants to vent. There will be a better time for you to respond. If you do have to speak, say something like, “I hear

what you are saying. It sounds like . . .”

Talk

Sometimes the best thing you can do when there is tension within the workplace (or any relationship for that matter) is to talk it through. Schedule a time you can meet privately with the individual with who you are having difficulties. Sometimes the difficulty is just a misunderstanding between the parties. Sometimes Bossy Pants is not aware of how you perceive the way their behaviors or words affect you. Very calmly explain to the person what you are feeling. Be prepared with an example or two of those behaviors. Make sure you do not allow your emotions to get the best of you so that you come off confrontational. It is also a good time to ask for feedback. But, remember when you do – go back to being a patient listener.

Approach from a positive presupposition.

Do not jump to conclusions or assume Bossy Pants is always coming at you with negative intentions. Always try your best to be positive and allow your boss to see you will tackle challenging situations with a great attitude.

See pg. 6.

BIRTHDAY
PARTY

DECEMBER

JOHN C. PANACCIO

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CHRISTINE PRATT

SUSAN BROWER

MARY WEST

If you do make an assumption—assume that your boss wants the best of you and the firm even if they do not know how to express it.

Build the relationship

Relationship. Relationship. Relationship. Get to know your boss. I do not mean becoming social media friends and going out to pubs with Bossy Pants. I am talking about taking a genuine interest in your boss's life. Look for opportunities to discuss common interests. Sometimes having a shared interest can help break down walls. Let your boss see you as a real person also. Be honest with your boss and allow them to see they can trust and depend on you. Do not forget to let your boss see you are committed to the position, working together and working as a team with him or her to build a great working relationship in order to meet the goals of the firm. Once you get to know and understand your boss better, you may better understand why he (or she) behaves and reacts the way he does.

Ask why

Stopping and asking yourself why your supervisor is acting in such a difficult manner can help determine how to fix the situation. More often than not, I am not even the cause of Bossy Pants' anger and frustration. Outside factors can often have an effect on people. I have worked with individuals who had spouses with terminal diseases, individuals going through a divorce, and even individuals who were getting pressure from their superiors. Without realizing it, they were bringing their own fears and frustrations to the office. When I stop to understand why people may be acting the way they are, I am better able to look past that behavior, and sometimes I can even help solve the problem. This also becomes easier to do once I have begun building a solid working relationship.

Leave

Sometimes we can work through all of the suggestions, and no matter what we try, we just cannot make the situation better. That is when it is time to reevaluate your position and if it is the healthiest place for you. This decision should never be made in haste. However, we all deserve respect, and if the situation is genuinely unhealthy, it may be time to look for a position elsewhere. If this is the route you choose, do so in a way that you are not burning any bridges. The legal community is a small one. If your boss is truly difficult, other attorneys and other firms already know it. Take the high road and refrain from bad-mouthing your (now) former supervisor.

Hopefully, you never find yourself working in a situation with a Bossy Pants. But, if you do, maybe a few of these tips will help you work through the situation for a much better working environment and relationship. ♦

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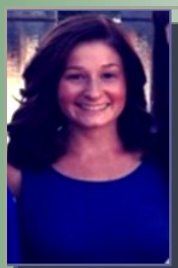
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Dana is a Litigation Paralegal at the law firm Kane Pugh Knoell Troy & Kramer, LLP. She has been a member of the Montgomery County Paralegal Association since 2013, and a board member since 2018. More recently, she has become the MCPA's Job Bank Coordinator and co-chair of the Community Outreach & Pro Bono committee.

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Tracey is a Paralegal at the law firm of Dischell Bartle & Dooley P.C. in its Lansdale office. She has been an active member since the organizations inception in 1999 and has been a Board Member, Secretary, Treasurer and President. She is currently the Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Associations Credentialing Chair. In 2017, she was appointed as the CLE-Associations Co-Coordinator for the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA).

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Trista is an Trust and Estate Paralegal at Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young, LLP in its Malvern office. She attended Central Pennsylvania College completing the Paralegal Program and graduated in 2009. In 2014, she received her Pa.C.P. certification through the Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Association. Trista lives in Douglassville with her husband and son.

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Deb is a Paralegal at the law firm Kaplin Stewart Meloff Reiter & Stein in its Blue Bell office. She has been a member of the Montgomery County Paralegal Association since 2003, serving as a board member from 2007 through 2011. Debbie has also co-chaired the MCPA Marketing Committee and currently co-chairs the Pro Bono and Community Outreach Committee. She has served as the primary delegate for the MCPA to the National Federation of Paralegal Associations for 10 years.

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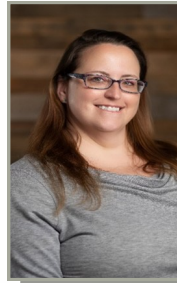


Noreen is a Paralegal with the law firm of Ford & Buckman, P.C. in Blue Bell and has worked with Sarah Ford, Esquire for over 40 years. She has been a Board member since 2010 and also serves on the Hospitality/Planning Committee. Noreen lives in Blue Bell and is the mother of three and Nana to three granddaughters.

Lisa Effrig Lagreca

Lisa is a Paralegal at the law firm of Dischell Bartle & Dooley P.C. in its Lansdale office. She recently graduated Summa Cum Laude from BCCC Paralegal Program and currently attends Pierce College. Lisa is a mother of four and grandmother of two. She has been a member of the MCPA since 2018 and is its newsletter editor.

Jennifer L. Echikson, Pa.C.P.



Jenn is a Family Law Paralegal at the law firm of Dischell Bartle & Dooley P.C. in its Lansdale office. She graduated from Peirce College in 2009 with a Bachelor of Science in Paralegal Studies. She became a certified paralegal through the Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Association in 2015. Jenn is on the planning and outreach committees for the MCPA and is also membership chair of the Family Law Paralegals of Pennsylvania.

Nancy Piechota, Pa.C.P.



Nancy is a Certified Paralegal at the law firm of Mannion Prior, LLP in King of Prussia. Nancy sits on the Board of Directors and also serves as Chair of the Marketing Committee. She was the past Vice President of Keystone Alliance and is the Primary Delegate to the Keystone Alliance for Montgomery County Paralegal Association. Nancy also served as the past President of the MCPA.

Karen D. Manzanares



Karen is a Law Clerk for Attorney Michelle A. Fioravanti and recently became a realtor. After graduating from

Villanova University she spent 22 years as a law clerk for the Governor's Office, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Chief Counsel in King of Prussia.

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