



## Review: The Asshole Survival Guide – How To Deal With People Who Treat You Like Dirt

I first came across Bob Sutton's (2010) book "[The No Asshole Rule: Building a civilised workplace and surviving one that isn't](#)" by chance a few years ago.

When I see clients, who work in difficult workplaces, I will often refer them to the original book.

I even had one case some years ago after a client came in as an EAP (*Employee Assistance Program*) client, at her bosses' suggestion because of workplace issues. After giving her a copy of a few excerpts, (to read and think about before our next session), she came back for a second visit to explain she came to realize it was not her that had the "problem" it was the boss!

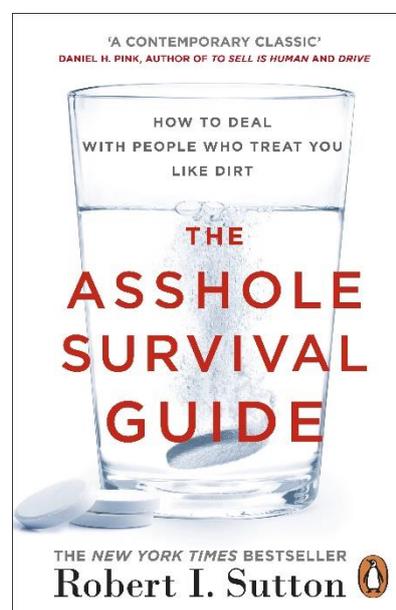
The new book is about how to deal with these assholes in the workplace. After his previous book, he says he got eight thousand emails from people wanting suggestions for how to do just that. This book is a compilation of examples and techniques based on both research and dozens of examples from a wide range of people exposed to assholes in a range of settings.

Early on in the new book, he has six diagnostic questions he expands on; 1.) Do you feel as if the alleged asshole is treating you (and perhaps others) like dirt; 2.) How long will the ugliness persist; 3.) Are you dealing with a temporary or certified asshole; 4.) Is it an individual or systematic disease; 5.) How much power do you have over the asshole and; 6.) How much are you really suffering?

He also describes a few interesting types of characters like; "grin#%ers" (admittedly I've "cleaned up" the name he gave) – who smile and grin to your face and then "stab you in the back" and "Rule Nazis" – people who insist on the rules being followed, no matter how impractical or petty. (Although admittedly I have been known to suggest knowing the rules can be a source of power, e.g. "How does this behaviour fit with the corporate mission to 'treat others with respect?'".)

He also talks about ten lies people tell themselves – also known as "Asshole Blindness". Some of my favourites include number 4 – *Tomorrow never comes: "I will leave for something better right after I finish this one important thing"* and number 10 – *The grass will be browner: "It's bad here, but it would be even worse for me elsewhere."*

Some interesting and worthwhile observations and warnings are also made about "spectacular" resignations from "difficult" workplaces.





He also covers the subject of “Trolling and “online Assholes” and the common denominator of *a lack of eye contact with their targets* along with dealing with *asshole* clients.

The book as a whole has lots of checklists and tips, apart from those already listed above, like the “Asshole Detection Tips” including looking for “Signs of a superiority complex” . Chapter 4 Asshole avoidance techniques expands on the ideas to; “Keep Your Distance”; “Ducking Strategies”; “Slow the Rhythm”; “Hide in Plain Sight” amongst others. A large part of one chapter talks about reframing and ways to “detach” from difficult situations.

There is also a whole section on “Fighting Back” (including the wrong way).

In talking about a “Battle for your dignity” he notes how “I’ve encouraged you to fight but not be an idiot about it”.

In summary, the book is not only made up of 100’s of wonderful anecdotes, but also peppered with research to back up his observations. My only caution would be that for those of a “sensitive” temperament, the language may at times be a bit too coarse, but probably no worse than you’d hear on a late-night train or bus. I’d say this is a good read for anyone dealing with difficult people in a range of settings.

Robert Sutton’s book (like it’s predecessor “[The No Asshole Rule](#)” – with its 70 plus listings in the *National Library of Australia’s* “Trove” (national library catalogue) will no doubt also go on to become a massive seller. It is already stocked (again by looking in “Trove”) in 17 libraries across Australia.

Review: “[The Asshole Survival Guide – How to Deal with people who treat you like Dirt](#)” (2017, by Robert Sutton) – Another interesting book by the author of the workplace classic “[The No Asshole Rule](#)” for looking at workplace difficulties

Written by, Colin Longworth.

#### Further Information.

For those wanting further information and writings by Robert Sutton they can go to <https://www.bobsutton.net/> where you can subscribe to his blog, see cartoons and find links to videos on his book. Some I like include: [NO ASSH\\$#%S](#) and [No ASSH\\$#%S The Musical](#)

Originally posted [16-01-2018](#)

<https://www.liferesolutions.com.au/huntingdale/review-asshole-survival-guide-deal-people-treat-like-dirt/>