

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88880-6 - Destructive Leaders and Dysfunctional Organizations: A Therapeutic Approach

Alan Goldman

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Advance praise for Destructive Leaders and Dysfunctional Organizations

"Destructive Leaders and Dysfunctional Organizations is unique in its approach, with examples of leadership we can all relate to. It is enlightening to understand abusive and uncivil leader behavior from a psychological perspective. This is a must-read for employees and managers alike. Thank you Dr. Goldman for your multi-disciplinary insights."

LEANNE ATWATER, Professor and Department Chair, C.T. Bauer College of Business, University of Houston

"Unlike many accounts of organizational dysfunction in the OD literature, Alan Goldman is direct and unapologetic when it comes to identifying and acknowledging psychopathology in contemporary organizations. His book promotes a clinical model and dialogue about human behavior in organizations that some scholars in the field would prefer not to have. If, as I have come to observe, addressing psychopathology in the workplace is about listening deeply and containing individual pain and anxiety, then Goldman's book is required reading in the field."

MICHAEL A. DIAMOND, Professor and Director, Center for the Study of Organizational Change, University of Missouri

"A razor-thin line, Alan Goldman tells us, separates the genius from the dark, tormented souls of many powerful and influential leaders. Goldman is not afraid to tackle this paradox head on, thus uncovering the Jekyll and Hyde personalities of many leaders and the toxicity that can suffuse an organization when narcissism, obsessiveness and other leadership dysfunctions go unchecked. This is a hugely illuminating book on the nature of leaders and leadership. It will be of great value to educators, researchers and those leaders who are wise enough to acknowledge their potential for error, delusion and folly."

YIANNIS GABRIEL, Professor of Organizational Theory, University of Bath

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"Destructive Leaders and Dysfunctional Organizations is the first book to detail critical psychological issues in leadership and their organizational impacts in an accessible manner with diagnostic insights and practical solutions. A must-read for serious scholar-practitioners of the management sciences and anyone who works with changing organizational behavior."

DAVID W. JAMIESON, President of the Jamieson Consulting Group, Inc. and Practicum Director of the American University/NTL MSOD Program, Washington, DC

"Anyone who has to deal with toxic leaders will find this book enlightening as it shows the way to diagnosing their underlying psychopathology. You will also enjoy Alan Goldman's skillful handling of some very tough customers."

MICHAEL MACCOBY, author of *The Leaders We Need and What Makes Us Follow* and *Narcissistic Leaders: Who Succeeds and Who Fails*

"It's out of the closet! In their times, revelations about spousal abuse and then about clerical abuse shocked people – but they also led to remedial action. Goldman's cases illustrate leadership abuses and the disturbing consequences when senior, powerful people suffer from mental aberrations. Every senior manager needs to understand the issues raised in this book in order to see how destructive leaders cause their associates and their businesses to suffer. Goldman's book can contribute to widespread recognition and solutions to the dark side of corporate life – so that executives can be on their toes and ready to act."

ROBERT H. SCHAFFER, consultant and author of *Rapid Results! How 100-Day Projects Build the Capacity for Large-Scale Change*

"In this absolutely fascinating book, Alan Goldman presents us with important cases of toxicity in leaders, but more importantly, he shows how individual pathology infects the entire organization and how coaching, consulting and therapy have to work together for some period of time to help both the individual and the infected organization. The

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book also shows the importance of using diagnostic tools to identify both the pathology and the necessary remedy."

EDGAR H. SCHEIN, Professor Emeritus, MIT Sloan School of Management, and author of *Process Consultation* and *Organizational Culture and Leadership*

"In response to corporate and leadership crises, Goldman's consulting and coaching narratives deliver deep insights into the pathological mechanisms of dysfunctional organizations and their leaders. His analysis of denial and resistance, greed and hubris, anger and narcissism is stimulating and thought-provoking. CEOs, scholars and students of leadership and organizational behavior will find powerful material in Goldman's unveiling of toxic leadership in areas as different as education, government, medicine, fashion, engineering and construction. *Destructive Leaders and Dysfunctional Organizations* is a very timely, helpful, action-oriented book and an extraordinary 'must-read' for corporate and business leaders, politicians, media leaders, management consultants and coaches alike."

GINKA TOEGEL, Professor of Leadership, IMD, Lausanne, Switzerland

"Evidence of errant and dysfunctional behavior by senior executives – and the misuse of their position and power – has increased in recent years and has justifiably become a matter of profound public concern. In this interesting book, Alan Goldman examines cases from his consulting work with top executives of counterproductive workplace behavior and illuminates some of the underlying psychological factors which have resulted in the pathological scenarios described."

MICHAEL WALTON, CLS Fellow, Centre for Leadership Studies, University of Exeter

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Destructive Leaders and Dysfunctional Organizations: A Therapeutic Approach

Organizational behavior and leadership research has traditionally been deeply influenced by positive psychology and appreciative inquiry. Yet, in recent times, a wave of corporate scandals and spectacular organizational failures has forced management and organizational theorists to rethink this approach. Unethical CEO behavior, white-collar crime, property deviance, employee grievances and lawsuits, organizational terrorism and workplace violence have all provided the impetus for an examination of the darker side of leadership. In *Destructive Leaders and Dysfunctional Organizations*, Alan Goldman draws on his extensive experience as a management consultant and executive coach to provide a fascinating behind-closed-doors account of troubled leaders and the effect they have on their organizations. Featuring clinical case studies, ranging from the fashion industry to an aeronautical engineering corporation, the book explores the damaging effects of destructive leadership on organizations and provides the tools necessary for early recognition, assessment and treatment.

ALAN GOLDMAN is Professor of Management at Arizona State University. He has many years' experience as a management consultant and executive coach to a range of corporations in the USA and Japan.

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Destructive Leaders

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Preface

Destructive Leaders and Dysfunctional Organizations: A Therapeutic Approach is the result of a journey that has led me to graduate school, research, writing, and the life of a professor and consultant. As a professor I have always been fascinated by the stories of movers and shakers. In this book I bring the narratives and human dramas of leaders and companies front and center stage. From behind closed doors I have heard swearing and cussing, prayers, confessionals, and self-disclosures that serve up the intricacies and complexities of leadership. As an external coach who is immersed with the client I strive to fully enter the organizational culture. I am committed to first and foremost understanding how a leader lives in her world. From the vantage point of the consultant-as-an-anthropologist I strive to hear what they hear, see what they see, think what they think and feel what they feel. Much like Sigourney Weaver in *Gorillas in the Mist*, I must enter the lived world and community en route to partaking in genuine conversations and observing real phenomena. Each chapter represents engagement in another professional and corporate culture ranging from engineering, heart surgery, and real estate development, to high couture fashion and sports and athletic wear.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I trust that the narratives and dramas that unfold in these pages will sufficiently usher you into the trials, struggles and toxicity of extraordinary leaders and their companies. Central is the discovery that all of the leaders presented in this book are both superb and exemplary as well as troubled and toxic. All leaders described harbor psychological hurdles and even psychopathologies. As a management consultant and leadership coach I heavily rely upon my training in counseling and

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clinical psychology to adequately assess, work with and provide interventions for the high toxicity levels of individuals and companies.

A razor-thin line emerges at times in my work with leaders as their complex personalities and behavior encompass both the superfunctional and the dysfunctional, the superlative and the toxic. In some cases the assessment trail leads directly to the cognitive and emotional makeup of an individual leader and in other scenarios much of the nexus can be found in ill and abruptly conceived company policies, downsizings and restructurings.

During the course of writing *Destructive Leaders* I have reached deep into my personal array of human resources. First and foremost I want to offer a heartfelt “thank you” to my exceptionally supportive colleague, Professor David Van Fleet, Department of Management, Arizona State University. David has always been there for me. Whenever I have been excited or doubtful about ideas for this project I naturally walked down the hallways and around the corridors to David’s office. Sparks frequently flew during our conversations. In David’s presence I connected many dots and always walked away clear and strong.

On a very personal note, my mom has entered into numerous conversations with me over some of the key ideas in this book. As a business woman she has a keen sense of leadership and human capital and has been an advisor, source of wisdom, and motivator. I also want to call attention to my wonderful children, Ben and Olivia. Many of the narratives and concepts in this book have been brought up during our commuting hours in the car and during the course of the last couple of years. I have always listened extremely carefully to their reactions to what I pitched their way as they have provided a perspective that is uniquely honest and perceptive.

I also want to thank Paula Parish and Cambridge University Press for their belief in this book and in the author. Paula has been extremely patient, supportive and insightful throughout the reviewing, writing, rewriting and editing process. She has been integral in this book becoming a reality.

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BRIDGES, NOT WALLS

Finally, I am hopeful that the focus on toxicity and dysfunction calls attention to the need to continue to build bridges between research streams spanning neighboring disciplines of management, psychology and communication. As a communicator I trust that the revealing of the subtext and darker side of companies and leaders serves the higher visions of positive leadership and extraordinary performance. The most prolific heads of organizations provide testimony that leadership can be a baffling and subtle blend of brilliance, turbulence and pathology.