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A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Dear Reader,

I'm writing to tell you about ***YOUR BOSS IS NOT YOUR MOTHER: Eight Steps To Eliminating Office Drama And Creating Positive Relationships At Work*** (Agate, 1-932841-16-4, May 26, 2006, \$14). Author Dr. Debra Mandel, PhD, a practicing psychologist for more than twenty years, brings her wealth of personal experience and professional insight to this essential new guide to improving relationships at work. **As featured in the April 2, 2006 "Career Couch" column of the *New York Times*, and on the June 10 CBS *Early Show*, Dr. Debra is the new go-to media authority on interpersonal relations in the workplace.**

Most people who are unhappy at work attribute it to their relationships with coworkers. These people suffer because they continually get sucked into workplace drama—with coworkers, bosses, subordinates, and clients. *Your Boss Is Not Your Mother* shows how people replicate problems with their colleagues that they had in childhood with their parents, siblings, teachers, or other important figures.

Dr. Debra breaks down how readers can respond more appropriately to the other people they deal with in the workplace, and how they can learn to avoid problem people and situations. Dr. Debra's eight-step path is accessible, insightful, and comprehensive, addressing virtually every variety of office drama. Both men and women can learn to create better work relationships by absorbing her insights.

Among the important topics addressed in *Your Boss Is Not Your Mother* are how to distinguish a truly abusive boss or coworker from one who is actually harmless; how to deal with flirtations and office romance opportunities; and how to negotiate the unique and often unexpected dilemmas women encounter when dealing with other women at work. It's full of interactive features—self-tests, exercises, checklists—designed to help readers explore and assess their workplace interactions.

Dr. Debra has worked with hundreds of women and men who've struggled with problems at work. *Your Boss Is Not Your Mother* is an incredibly valuable new resource for the millions of people dealing with these kinds of problems. I hope you'll contact me regarding a review or interview with Dr. Debra. She is a savvy media veteran and a terrific interviewee who has appeared on literally hundreds of radio and TV shows, including high-profile appearances on shows like *Starting Over*, *My Big Fat Obnoxious Fiancé*, *30 Days* with Morgan Spurlock, *The 750 Pound Man*, *Fox News*, and *The Larry Elder Show*, and radio shows in syndicated markets across the country. She is available for live and taped phone interviews everywhere. You can reach me at 847.475.4457 or seibold@agatepublishing.com to set something up.

Best,

Doug Seibold

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Praise for DR. DEBRA MANDEL and ***YOUR BOSS IS NOT YOUR MOTHER***

“Clinical psychologist Mandel's premise is crystal clear--readers have the power to end their workplace misery: "It doesn't matter who you work for, or who you work with...." The text lays out simple steps to change, including anecdotal examples and workbook-style exercises to help readers "stop responding to people in the workplace from a childhood-oriented perspective and to get rid of old defenses that don't really help in workplace settings." Mandel works hard to keep the text simple and psychobabble-free, which readers will value.... packed with practical advice and ideas.... many readers will benefit from Mandel's straightforward advice.”

Publishers Weekly, May 1, 2006

“...the premise shines through: our experience at work can be the sum total of all our learned experiences and behaviors. Her exercises help define the issues and provide new actions to adopt, beginning with a test on how “the old stuff affects you in the workplace” to ending with a confidence-building scenario. It is all about self-awareness—and the courage to change, whether initiated individually or implemented with the help of a counselor.

Barbara Jacobs, *Booklist*, May 15, 2006

“Anyone who finds past wounds getting in the way of present career success will want to read this book. Dr. Mandel realistically describes counterproductive workplace scenarios that result from childhood bruising—and more importantly, tells you how to heal them so that you can reach your full adult potential.”

Lois P. Frankel, PhD, author, *Nice Girls Don't Get the Corner Office*

“*Your Boss is Not Your Mother* covers new territory for women who want to transform their jobs into joys. Dr. Debra Mandel's premise is that emotional bruises can continue to wound in the workplace as old relationship dynamics are acted out again and again with coworkers and bosses. In addition to helpful illustrations of “office drama” that readers will readily recognize, the book is packed with practical advice on how to take inventory of your own behavior and quality-of-work life. Her eight strategies for creating positive work relationships can help every woman discover gainful employment, in terms of job satisfaction as well as salary.”

Cheryl Dellasega, PhD, author, *Surviving Ophelia*, *GirlWars*, and *Mean Girls Grown Up*

“A real eye-opener for women who are stressed out by unhealthy relationships at work. Dr. Debra Mandel shines a clear light on how to identify and break free from re-enacting childhood problems in the workplace. A compassionate and very readable book. I highly recommend it.”

Susan Forward, PhD, author, *Toxic Parents* and *Emotional Blackmail*

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“Dr. Debra Mandel puts us in the driver’s seat where we belong. She shows us how to crash through the barriers that come with all bumpy relationships. She teaches us how to empower ourselves by owning our own choices and taking responsibility for our actions. *Your Boss Is Not Your Mother* shows us how to do everything we can to make sure we work well with others—disallowing problem people that make our jobs miserable. This is a truly useful guide to improving workplace relationships.”

Georgia Durante, author, *The Company She Keeps*, president/founder, Performance Two

“Navigating through office politics is tough. Dr. Debra Mandel provides readers with clear pointers on how to overcome the challenges that each of us face in our work (and even our personal) relationships. Her no-nonsense, practical approach equips readers to be effective communicators in their work relationships. If you’re the boss, or if you want to be the boss, you should be reading this book!”

Paul M. French, CEO Paul French International, Inc.

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YOUR BOSS IS NOT YOUR MOTHER EIGHT STEPS TO ELIMINATING OFFICE DRAMA AND CREATING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK

by
Debra Mandel, PhD

HOOK: An essential new guide to uprooting and solving the underlying problems that cause office drama, with positive guidance for improving workplace relationships.

According to *CareerWomen.com*, 66 percent of women who are unhappy at work attribute it to their relationships with coworkers. These women suffer because they continually get sucked into needless workplace drama—with co-workers, bosses, subordinates, and clients. In doing so, they're usually replicating problems they had with parents, siblings, or others in childhood. Once ensnared, these women don't have the knowledge or tools to escape these traps. *Your Boss Is Not Your Mother* attacks these workplace problems at the roots. Using real-life stories and anecdotes, it demonstrates how to respond to people in the workplace with a clear head. You'll also learn:

- How to distinguish a truly abusive boss or coworker from one who is actually harmless
- How to deal with flirtations and office romance opportunities
- What is sexual harassment and what to do if you think you're a victim
- How to negotiate the often unexpected dilemmas of dealing with other women at work.

This warm and insightful new guide is full of interactive features—self-tests, exercises, checklists—designed to help you explore and assess your workplace interactions. *Your Boss Is Not Your Mother* will help you let go of negative influences and take charge of your work life.

Debra Mandel, PhD, is a clinical psychologist, speaker, columnist, and media expert with more than twenty years of experience dealing with relationships, depression, anxiety, survivors of abuse, and general life concerns. She regularly appears on national television and radio, sharing her expertise on a variety of topics. Some of her many TV appearances include the shows *Starting Over*, *The 750 Pound Man*, *Thirty Days* with Morgan Spurlock, *My Big Fat Obnoxious Fiance*, and several others yet to be aired. She was also featured as a regular guest expert on the syndicated TV talk show, *The Larry Elder Show*, and hosted her own radio show, "Shrink Rap," which aired weekly on KCSN in Los Angeles. She is the author of the book *Healing the Sensitive Heart* (Adams Media, 2003 and Airleaf Publishing, 2005) and two CDs, *Creating Healthy Boundaries in the Workplace* and *The Abuser Friendly Syndrome*. You can contact Dr. Debra on the web at www.drdebraonline.com for more information.

***Your Boss Is Not Your Mother*, ISBN 1932841164, 6x9, 190 pp, May 26 2006, \$14.00**

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About **Dr. Debra Mandel** and the writing of ***YOUR BOSS IS NOT YOUR MOTHER***

What motivated you to write *Your Boss Is Not Your Mother*?

Though I currently work solely in private practice, over the years, I've held jobs in many different settings, and I have always been fascinated by the dynamics among coworkers and between coworkers and their bosses. I myself have been both the instigator of workplace drama as well as the recipient of drama created by others. It wasn't until I understood how much this was triggered by old hurts from childhood that I could finally act like a mature adult on the job and stop getting seduced by old issues. With insights gained from both my personal and professional work, I hope to reach many people and offer them new tools to deal with similar struggles.

Can men benefit from this book as much as women?

Absolutely! Though men aren't as apt to buy a book like this one, they can certainly benefit equally as women. Men too carry around unresolved stuff and play this out with their peers in the workplace. Many examples throughout the book involve men. Also, even if a man doesn't personally connect with the information in the book, he will almost certainly have to *work* with other people who bring their issues to the job. And in this book, he can learn tools to fend off other people's dysfunctions.

Aren't humans just prone to drama, especially in a competitive environment?

Competition is a normal and healthy part of many job environments. This in and of itself isn't the kind of "drama" referred to in the book. "Drama" in *Your Boss Is Not Your Mother* refers specifically to interactions that have an emotional undercurrent stemming from unresolved issues created by one's significant relationships in the past. This kind of drama is spring-loaded by old stuff that doesn't belong in the workplace. When this gets resolved, people become free to have much more fulfilling relationships so they can more fully invest themselves in their work.

Can people truly "own" their emotional wounds to the extent that they become an advantage?

Most definitely! In fact, this is the main premise of the book. We are not damaged by emotional struggles; instead, we actually become enriched by them once we become more conscious of them, and transform them into positive energy. For instance, if a woman endured a childhood where she wasn't given any positive attention, and then later she truly heals from this, she can then turn around and become an awesome manager in the workplace because she'll be more capable of recognizing the importance of praising her team for their positive efforts. She'll be better able to understand the importance of reinforcement and acknowledgment. Hence her misfortune in childhood becomes a source of strength in adulthood.

Is it really possible to stop using old defense mechanisms and approach workplace relationships with a clean slate?

Defense mechanisms aren't a bad thing. Actually, they come into play for our protection—i.e., to keep us from feeling too much emotional discomfort. The key is not to get rid of defenses, but rather to become more conscious about how or whether to use them. In doing so, most often we'll discover that we have the resources to deal with situations head on, because as adults we have much more control and power over our lives than we did as children (which is when those kinds of defenses get developed).

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After shedding these old defense mechanisms, has a client ever expressed a sense that she has lost her identity, or that her coworkers have trouble adjusting to her new approaches?

People resist change. That's just the nature of being human. We tend to preserve the status quo, even when we recognize intellectually that how we function just doesn't work for us anymore. So, yes, sometimes people will feel as though they are losing a part of their identity. And they may have to go through a grieving process, even though they can recognize there are great benefits associated with changing. However, when people see defenses as a behavioral choice—not an ingrained part of their character—they are less likely to feel they are losing part of themselves.

Also, because systems—and not just individuals—resist change, sometimes coworkers may have trouble adjusting to new behavior in others. In fact, some people will work overtime (unknowingly) to sabotage a positive change in a coworker, even if that change is reaping benefits for everyone. For instance, let's say you have a boss who is a yeller. He gets some help, and learns how to modulate his tone so that he doesn't intimidate others. It's common in this kind of situation for some coworkers to become antagonistic toward this boss, in an unconscious effort to get that familiar old yelling response. The boss will have to resist this unconscious provocation. Over the long run, if he doesn't fall back into the old patterns, the pressure from others will tend to subside. But temporarily, you might actually see the coworkers “acting-out” because they will feel compelled to get the behavior they've become accustomed to, even if they were the same ones complaining about it.

You suggest many ways to relieve stress in the book. How is stress related to workplace drama?

Stress adds to workplace drama and vice versa. It's essential that in addition to working through our old stuff, we also find tools to manage our stress. Otherwise, we won't really reap the benefits of healing the past. Working long hours, handling the challenges of meeting deadlines, answering other people's demands—all of which are aspects of our work lives—can lead to terrible stress. It's imperative to learn how to discharge stress and replenish ourselves with exercise, eating right, getting enough rest, and enjoying our time off.

Does workplace drama stay at the office, or does it tend to seep into other areas of our lives?

It's always been my premise that we are who we are pretty much wherever we go. Though some situations tend to elicit different responses, we tend to have a dominant style of approaching life. Naturally, then, if we are prone to creating drama in the workplace, we're probably going to experience the same energy in our personal relationships. Though some of us are better at keeping the two more separate, most people will have some slop-over from one arena to the next. All of our interactions benefit when we deal with our old issues.

How can we best protect ourselves from other people's drama?

Even when we work through our own issues, there's a high probability that we'll encounter others in the workplace who can't help but to stir up trouble. Many remain unconscious about their unresolved issues throughout their entire lives, perpetuating an ongoing sense of being victimized. Fortunately, we don't need others to be “fixed” in order to keep our own selves free of drama. We can minimize the impact of other people's stuff by setting good boundaries within the workplace and by making a clear distinction between our professional and personal lives.