

## Work Life... Skipping the chain of command

### **Situation:**

I worked later than usual yesterday because of an important meeting and was headed down the stairwell to drop off a report to my boss on my way out the door. Coming up the stairs was one of the men who works for me. I was surprised to see him there after 6:00 and it looked as if he was surprised to see me. Aaron was all smiles and mentioned that he had just talked to my boss Sarah about transferring to another department. Immediately I got anxious.

### **Symptoms:**

Just two weeks ago Aaron and I had a conversation about a possible transfer and I told him then that I would need him for at least the next 45 days. And that after that we could talk to Sarah together and see what we could work out. I really thought we had it all straight.

Now I was thinking: “That jerk, he’s gone behind my back and I have no idea what Sarah told him, but it must be something good. He’s all smiley and I’m not. Who does he think he is? I hate it when subordinates don’t discuss things with me. We should have been able to resolve this without getting Sarah involved.”

My stomach was acting up and the tension headache in my temples that I had all afternoon started throbbing even more. I was miserable.

### **Solution:**

Because I had a class to attend in about an hour and was already feeling bad, I knew I had to calm myself down. I made the decision to bypass Sarah’s office on my way out. The report I had in my hand didn’t really have to get to her until the next day. As I drove out of the parking lot I started some positive self-talk.

The reality is: This situation is bothering me a lot, but it’s really not dangerous. At this point I didn’t know what Aaron and Sarah had decided. I really didn’t know if anything had been decided. All this is my outer environment and I can’t control them – only me.

Irritations, frustrations and disappointments are part of everyday life – and this was a disappointment – I thought it was all settled.

To get rid of the anger thoughts I told myself that Aaron wasn’t wrong, he was average. He’s not the first person in the world who went higher up the ladder to try to get what he wanted.

Once I made the effort to neutralize the angry thoughts, I zeroed in on me using the word “subordinate.” If Aaron was my subordinate, then I had to be Sarah’s subordinate. I

don't want to think of myself as anyone subordinate, as if I was inferior to anybody. So why am I thinking that Aaron's a "subordinate?"

That was a real eye-opener for me. No wonder I was scared that Sarah might be thinking I did something wrong and that's why Aaron went over my head. I wasn't wrong I was average for how I handled that first conversation with Aaron.

The transfer issue and how it was going was somewhat important in work life, but when I weighed it against my sense of well-being, it took second place. First, foremost and always, my health comes first.

The truth is, Aaron was looking out for his best interest, just like I was looking out for mine.

***In the past:***

In the past I would have gone straight to Sarah's office to find out exactly what transpire "behind my back." Aaron would have been wrong, wrong, wrong. And I would have been right. I had to be right! I was his manager. I would have brought all sorts of past issues and former "problems" too.

I would have left the office even later, been rushed, skipped dinner and been so fatigued that I couldn't pay attention in class and then started worrying about flunking the class.

Before my worried about every little thing and all my days were a lot more hectic

