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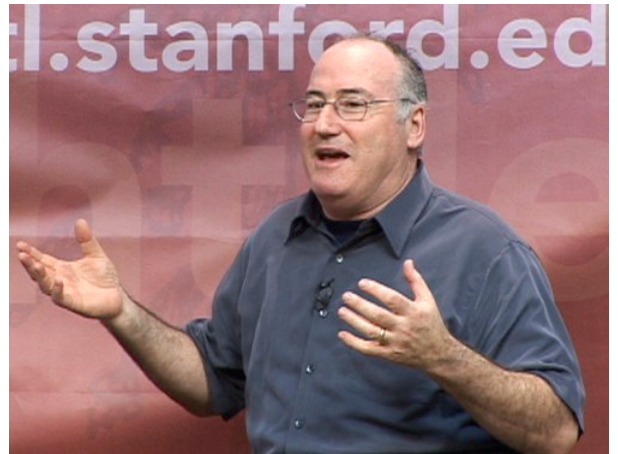
Recognizing a Jerk

Bob Sutton, *Stanford University*

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/1740/Recognizing-a-Jerk>

Robert Sutton, Professor of Management Science and Engineering in the Stanford Engineering School, and Co-Director of the Center for Work, Technology, and Organization, talks about different methods to recognize a jerk. He identifies jerks from a victim's perspective, studying different characteristics like yelling, abuse and screaming and looking at political backstabbing. Sutton says there are numerous ways in which jerks operate but he tends to focus on the damage done to the victim.



Transcript

So how do you recognize a jerk? So, a lot of the ideas in this book are stolen or borrowed from the Literature on Bullying or Psychological Abuse in the Workplace. So if you look at that literature, there's two ways in which they approach it. One is the way I approached it in the book which focuses on the victim's perspective. So, I focus on sort of two main things in the victim's perspective. If somebody who does this, does it leave the person feeling de-energized and demeaned? And then the other approach is, and people who study psychological abuse do this, they sort of have long lists. In fact, there are some researchers in East Coast who have listed some 60 different ways in which you can abuse people, and they tend to break into different characteristics. One is sort of just abuse, yelling, screaming. The other approach is sort of political backstabbing, the third approach is sort of treating people as if they are invisible. So there's lots of ways in which jerks can do their dirty work. But I tend to focus on the damage done to the victim.

And then the other thing which is also I think, very important is that a lot of evidence that people who are demeaning, especially at a work place, they tend to, if you will, kiss up and kick down. So one of the main ideas in the book is one of the better tests I have for human being is how people treat people who have less rather than more status than them.