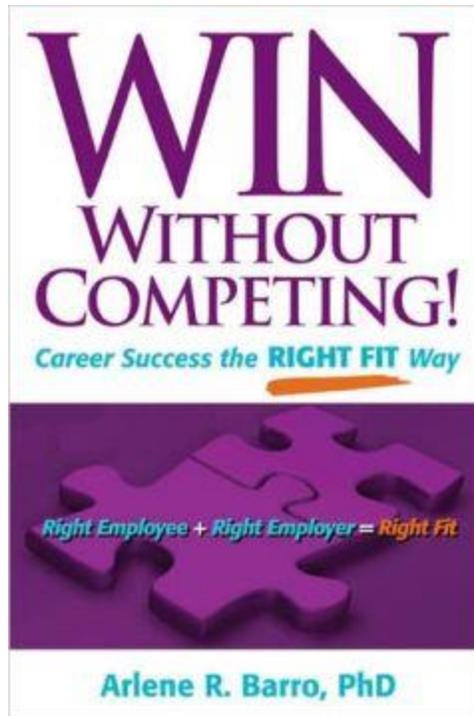


Conquering Stress! With Dr. Arlene —Slave Driver Jeff Bezos Causes Stress



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By Dr. Arlene Barro

Billionaire Jeff Bezos verbally bullies his employees, turning them into slaves who become robots in a culture of fear, forcing them to flee or submit. He either makes them do what he wants or breaks them. Bezos shows no remorse, only delight in being the richest man in the world. The tyrant continues his tyranny.

Only One Brand: Amazon

According to writer Ruth Umoh, in *Why Jeff Bezos wants Amazon employees to wake up every morning terrified*, August 28, 2018, *cnn.com*, “Complacency is the kiss of death in business and in life. That’s why Jeff Bezos recommends using fear to drive the work ethic and innovative thinking — even when things are going well.” Remember that employee retention is not his goal. Bezos sees Amazon employees as disposal. Their stress and anxiety are unimaginable under boss Bezos.

Journalist Brad Stone gained unprecedented access to Amazon. In Stone’s book *The Everything Store: Jeff Bezos the Age of Amazon*, he cited the following zingers that Bezos hurled at employees:

- “Are you lazy or just incompetent?”
- “If I hear that idea again, I’m gonna have to kill myself.”
- “Why are you ruining my life?”

Stone said that Bezos was difficult to impress and easy to agitate. Moreover, his cutthroat management style includes hiring top tech teams to work against each other. Bezos hires consultants and ignores their advice. He uses fear, anxiety, and stress to motivate employees and consultants.

The most tormented and stressed employees at Amazon are the warehouse workers. According to writer Shona Ghosh in *Amazon warehouse workers tell us their horror stories*, May 5, 2018, *Business Insider.com*, “working as a warehouse worker at Amazon is modern slavery.” They were under such pressure to get products shipped that they did not have enough time for bathroom breaks. Peeing in trash cans was their solution.

They are expected to turn around 600,000 items in a regular day. During holidays they are forced to work up to 55 extra hours. They are under constant surveillance. The stress is so intense that workers experience asthma attacks on the job. High turnover rate at Amazon is no surprise. Bezos continues to grow the Amazon brand. The sky is the limit. Employees are a means to an end.

Mrs. Gooch Sets the Standard

Who is Sandy Gooch? A school teacher, propelled by passion, who is a memorable entrepreneur. In 1977 she founded Mrs. Gooch’s, the first natural-food store. On May 3, 2016 she shares her fascinating story with Nancy Montuan on her Vegan Podcast: *How Sandy Gooch Started A Natural Revolution*.

It all began with Gooch’s quest for healing herself. She took tetracycline for an earache in 1974, to which she was highly allergic, but did not know it. The result: violent seizures, disorientation, pain radiating in her chest and down her arms with no identifiable diagnosis and cure. Her father, a research biologist and chemist, owned a wholesale pharmaceutical company. He told his daughter that she must heal herself and that food is the answer. His advice: eliminate all foods with chemicals and additives.

To do that, Gooch drove from Santa Barbara to San Diego to buy the right foods. One day she drank a half glass of beer and had a setback because of hidden chemicals. Then, she ate chicken and experienced a total relapse. Why? The chicken had been dipped in tetracycline which was the law in California at the time. Finally, she learned that she was highly allergic to this drug. That experience was the tipping point, which ignited her passion to create Mrs. Gooch’s.

The store adhered to the following standards: no flour, no sugar, no artificial flavors, colors, additives, and no caffeine. She took pride that customers would never have to read a label at Mrs. Gooch’s. To guarantee

high standards, Gooch hired labs to test her products to match her standards to be sure they were Goochable.

By 1990, Mrs. Gooch's was the largest natural market in the world. She focused on consumer loyalty and trust. Customers even came to shop from New York City and flew their products home.

In 1993, Mrs. Gooch sold her "labor of love" to Whole Foods to expand the brand. On one hand, she was comfortable about the sale, on the other, she was sad and that sadness lasted for more than a year. What happened next?

Jeff Bezos Lowers Standards

In 2017, Amazon buys Whole Foods. Bezos focuses on making money not on the mission. Service and relationship building, escorting customers to unmarked aisles, are only fond memories now. The employees are not allowed to spend time talking to customers or to each other. Even the profit sharing for employees was eliminated by Bezos, who also cut employees. Setting the stage for self-service, so it appears.

Many high-quality products have been replaced with the ordinary. The specialty products that made both Mrs. Gooch's and Whole Foods unique have been eliminated. As for pricing, preference is given to Amazon Prime members. Bezos is focusing on driving customers to Amazon, as he destroys the Whole Foods brand. We need a new Mrs. Gooch.

Writer Michael Sainato in *They want us to be robots: Whole Foods workers fear Amazon changes*, October 1, 2018, the *Guardian* describes OTS..." order to shelf system is a strict set of procedures for employees to follow that uses scorecards to prescribe specific ways to store, display items on store shelves and in stock rooms." The goal is to make employees interchangeable, which is another way of saying robots.

In a Whole Foods store, an employee in the Whole Body department showed me where each label on the shelf needed to be placed: not in the center below the product, but on the left side. Can you imagine doing this throughout the store? And of course tags for prepared foods must be washed! When? About an hour and a half before closing time. That means all the tags have been removed. To sell a salad, the employee needs to find the tag for the price per pound. Bezos did not factor into the OTS system the time lost searching for the tags. I laughed, as I watched this absurd procedure unfold.

Employees are not robots and should not allow anyone to dehumanize them. Working in a culture like Amazon's is unhealthy. There are other employers who have similar mindsets. Avoid working for employers who do not value and respect employees. In order to keep stress, anxiety and fear low, necessary for good health, select the Right Fit employer.

To learn more, I recommend reading *Bad Bosses Cause Stress*, May 2018, and *Trump Turmoil Causes Stress*, December 2018. Bezos and Trump are a fascinating duo. Discover what traits they share. For instant stress relief, read *Not Laughing Causes Stress*, April 2018. Conquering Stress is achievable.

Questions about this column? Email drbarro@barroglobal.com.

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