

## Testimonial...

I have a good job, better than I deserve, really. Been at the same place for over 5 years now. I was so pleased that at my five year anniversary I bought pizza for all my co-workers. Not long after that, relations with two of them went rapidly downhill. I would find my work sabotaged. Not seriously, but it was subtle, and to my mind, sinister. I had already put a padlock on my locker because someone had gotten inside. There is a radio in the building for everyone and though it plays hundreds of channels, only one was allowed by these two. No matter who turned it on or what station it was, they would boldly walk up and change it to what they wanted. I like metal as much as the next guy, but months of it on end was absolutely too much. Other workers complained, even customers complained when they had to walk through an area pressurized by music heavy with the f-word. The manager did what he could, even physically taking the damn thing off the wall for a week. They promptly brought in their own radio, set it up, and dared anyone to do anything about it. Talks to these two from the supervisor didn't help. Talks from the building manager didn't help. Management was completely on my side, but also hampered by what they were allowed to do. One day garbage showed up on my work area. Each time I cleaned it up, more would appear if I stepped away for even a moment. In the past I'd bought a trail camera to try to catch the saboteur but it was unsuitable for what I needed. On my lunch break I hid behind a large machine and watched my work area. I felt foolish until fifteen minutes into my vigil I actually saw my co-worker throw garbage into my work area. I went to the supervisor, very upset. He was upset, too. This was a huge strain on the whole place. Again a talk in the office with the offender, again, nothing really changed. I felt alone, hated.

I had a prime opportunity when I saw him throw garbage onto my things to step out and confront him. Instead, I handed things off to management. I thought that was the proper way to handle things. In a way, it was. I was also crippled by something in my past that wouldn't let me take charge of any situation, even if it was just me.

When I was less than ten years old, my youngest brother was killed in freak accident. I held his hand as he died. I heard the rattle. I had been the big brother, the one in charge. I blamed myself. Never again did I allow myself to be in charge. I gave that power to others. If something bad was going to happen, at least it wouldn't be my fault. I was never the same.

Back at work, I developed a pain in my neck. It would crack as I moved my head around, and neither chiropractors or massage therapists could make any headway. It was so bad some days that a bump in the road would cause significant pain while driving.

I began to look for other work. Finding work was not a problem, but I would still stand to lose lots of money and benefits starting over at another place. My wife supported me, but I could tell it was bothering her a lot too. Not just the money, but, you see, this had happened twice before. At two other jobs I had been forced away by threats, both implied and real. Why did this keep happening? I always treat others with courtesy and respect. That served me well in most situations, but not this. *Conflict* was not in my tool kit.

Unwilling to lose the best job I've ever had, I turned to Gayle. We have known each other for about thirteen years. We met when my oldest child joined her martial arts class. Eventually I also joined and I still refer to her as Sensei Gayle.

This time I was willing to fight. I knew that something had to change and that something was me. I had always wanted to improve myself but this time was different. This time I was willing, *willing*, to change who I was. I made an appointment, we talked. Because she knew me so well, she could quickly make connections about the situation that evaded me. She asked, "Are you ready to make that change?" "Yes." "On a scale of one to ten, how much?" I raised an arm high above my head. "Eleven."

She guided me through hypnosis, and the images we formed there I cherish still.

The contract I had made at eight years old no longer applied. It had served its purpose, run its course, been fulfilled. Now I could take charge. I would change this situation and that was it.

I went back to work the next day and informed my supervisor that I would be taking charge of the radio. There was already a list by the radio of names and days so everyone could have a turn. It had been completely ignored. Now I was going to make it stick.

The day after that I chose a convenient moment to have a little chat with the chief offender's little helper. This went very well. No rancor was exchanged, but it was plain who was in charge.

Soon after, I met with a co-worker who had been with the company for over 30 years. He's gruff and crusty, but a good guy. He knew of my plight. "How are things?" he asked. "Good," I replied. Then I added quietly, "Things are different now."

Something in the tone of my voice made him stop what he was doing and look intently at me. He seemed to understand. "Good," he growled. "Raise a little Hell."

Things *were* different. I looked at my opponent, hoping to catch his gaze, but he kept his head down. The radio stayed under control. The whole place felt different. I realized that this wasn't about me, it was about *them*. *They* were doing wrong. *They* were causing discord. I had nothing to be sorry for or be afraid of.

It was almost a month after the big change that my opponent surprised me with an apology. He admitted to being unprofessional and was sorry for having offended me. We shook hands and agreed to start over. With that, the last rough spot was smoothed over. Today, as a matter of fact, I had the pleasure of dropping into the manager's office and telling him that peace had returned to his little kingdom. He sat back, pleased and slightly astonished. He stood by me when all I had to report was bad news, so he deserved to hear the good news, too.

The pain in my neck is now gone.

My wife, my beautiful, long-suffering wife is happy with the new me. I'm a lot more decisive, no longer so moody. She had always encouraged these characteristics in me and I would have obliged, if I could have done it on my own. Gayle helped the good come out.

I sincerely hope that whoever reads this is able to find the same measure of change that I have. If these events had been predicted to me in the past I would have laughed. I've been trying to change for so long and in so many ways and known nothing but disappointment. But not this time. Not this time.

Somehow everything came together, like a key in a lock.

This was my experience, these are the facts, and this is my battle cry: *Things are different now.*