

# Destructive Leadership as a Phenomenon in HR Management Reflective Essay

Destructive leadership is described as “a process in which over a longer period of time the activities, experiences and/or relationships of an individual or the members of a group are repeatedly influenced by their supervisor in a way that is perceived as hostile and/or obstructive” (Schyns & Schilling, 2013, p. 4).

The consequences may include resistance and deviant work behavior, decrease in job satisfaction and commitment, job tension, and reduced employee wellbeing (stress, emotional exhaustion). The authors also included some suggestion regarding the reasons for destructive leadership. They reflected that it may be a result of ineffective leadership that has led the followers to question the leader’s position.

The authors admit that the actions believed to be destructive can help to regain the leadership position in the short run; however, the damage to the leader’s image and followers’ trust is bound to render this strategy ineffective sooner or later.

While the negative impact of destructive relationships appears to be apparent, it is important to receive scientific data supporting this point. Apart from that, in my opinion other issues need to be discussed in this respect. The idea of destructive leadership being an oxymoron caught my eye.

The authors explain why the influence that a leader has on followers can be called leadership regardless of its effects, and I agree that this power can be used for negative purposes. However, it appears as important that the destructive leadership does not have to be intentional. In this respect, the issue of perception seems to be important. It appears to be necessary to take into account and assess the way followers perceive a leader’s actions.

Elsewise, the leader is in danger of using destructive leadership without fully realizing it. Apart from that, I do not believe that the consequences and the actual impact of any kind of negative behavior are necessary for defining destructive leadership. In case the actions of a leader have the potential of becoming destructive, they need to be rectified.

## **Applying the Insights to the Future Career**

Taking into account all the possible adverse outcomes of destructive leadership, I would intend to avoid abusing my power over the employees. Apart from that, I attempt to take into account the fact that it is not strictly the behavior of the leader, but its perception in the eyes of the followers that has practical influence.

I know that I need to be sensitive to my followers’ perception of my actions, which can be achieved through developing my social and emotional skills. Apart from that, I believe that a

trust- and respect-based relationship with employees can facilitate the process of opinion exchange among us. In this case, the problem of the difference in perception can be solved.

### **Thought-Provoking Questions**

1. The problem of perception differences appears to be very significant to me. I have expressed my suggestions regarding it; I wonder if my peers could brainstorm this issue with me to arrive at a more consistent conclusion.
2. The authors point out that the destructive leadership can be found on individual and group levels (Schyns & Schilling, 2012, p. 4). However, would not an individual-level destructive leadership be destructive on a group level? I would suggest regarding the issues of the leader being a model of negative behavior in this case.

### **Reference**

Schyns, B., & Schilling, J. (2012). How Bad Are the Effects of Bad Leaders? A Meta-Analysis of Destructive Leadership and Its Outcomes. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 24(1), 138-158. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.09.001