



Dear Barry,

For the past 17 years, I have worked at a major retailer. Over the years, I have gotten great reviews, moved up from a sales associate, to store manager. My goal was to be a regional manager within the next two years. I am 34 years old gay male, college educated and a team player at work.

Recently, a new regional manager was hired. He is homophobic and has no knowledge of the stores. He has cut me off in meetings when I am sharing, belittled me in front of other managers and my staff and has set me up at work with unattainable goals. He has turned his immediate boss against me, so I have nowhere to turn.

I am totally stressed out, not sleeping, and scared. My partner of 10 years and I recently bought a house and I cannot afford to lose this job in this economy.

My doctor has put me on anti-depressants, anti-anxiety meds and sleeping aids. He has suggested that I go out on disability before I get fired, and take the time to look for another job. I have a friend in HR at the company, and she told me they are double checking everything in my resume to see if there is cause to fire me.

What do I do? I love the job, and was a star performer before this man came into the picture. Do I follow my doctor's advice and take a leave or continue to work and hope the situation will get better, or find another job?

Signed Blindsided

Dear Blindsided,

I would immediately go to a psychiatrist besides your doctor and have him prescribe the medication, Start seeing a therapist and then file a disability claim with all three professionals backing the claim. You are in a no win situation. As long as this man is above you, your work life will be hell. Most companies have group disability policies, besides the state disability.

He obviously has it out for anyone who can perform better than him. Besides being homophobic, he is also aware of your talents and probable wants to remove any threat to his position in the future.

Once on disability you will need to rebuild your self confidence. Then I would start looking for another job. Hopefully, you do not let this situation derail you from your goal of becoming a regional manager. In time this man's true colors will show up to his superiors and they will realize the destruction he has caused. In most cases though, they tend to leave the position for another one before their own incompetency shows up.

In the end, this might have been a blessing, because if you get with the right company, you might have a better chance of succeeding in becoming a regional manager, than at this company. In the meantime, take care of yourself, relax, and find another job. Use your networking and find another manager's position and become the best you can.