



STILL CHOSEN · FREE GUIDE

Am I Imagining This?

Recognise the patterns of mobbing

You are not unreliable for being unsure. The confusion is the design — not a symptom of something wrong with you.

Ten minutes. Twenty-five questions. One rule that tells a difficult job apart from something organised.

It can come back either way.
That is what makes it worth doing.

WHAT IT FEELS LIKE FROM INSIDE

You cannot point to when it changed.

Your environment has changed and you cannot point to when. It is as though everyone is keeping a secret you are not part of. You ask, and the hesitation that comes back is remarkable.

The hesitation, the side glances, the whispers, sometimes the snickering — it becomes too consistent to keep explaining away. You are left out of a family gathering. Your congregation seems to know something you do not. The talk at work stops when you walk in.

And still, none of it is proof. No single piece of it tells you anything on its own.

That is not an accident. It is the method.

This can happen anywhere people are organised: churches, workplaces, families, neighbourhoods, whole communities, or several at once. The word for it is **mobbing**.

If you react before you can describe the pattern, you will sound as though you are reaching. They will say you sound **unwell**. That outcome is built into the design — it is what the scattering is for.

What happens next depends on whether you move with precision or react in the dark.

THE RULE THAT DECIDES IT

Count the groups, not the ticks.

In 1990 a psychologist named Heinz Leymann published the first proper study of this, built from three hundred interviews with people it had happened to. He found forty-five distinct behaviours, and that they fall into five groups: what you are allowed to say, who you are allowed to know, what people believe about you, what work you are given, and what it does to your body.

One hostile person produces ticks in one group.

A group working together produces ticks in several at once.

That is the signature. It is not how many things happened — it is how many different parts of your life they happened in. A manager who dislikes you attacks your work. Mobbing attacks your work *and* your reputation *and* your contacts *and* your voice, because different people are doing different parts and none of them thinks of themselves as the villain.

The five groups overleaf are Leymann's, not mine. The structure is his research; the wording of the twenty-five items is mine. The full citation is at the back, and the paper is his work — it is cited here, not offered as my own.

How to use the checklist

Tick anything that has happened **more than once**. Once is an incident. Twice is a pattern.

Be honest rather than fair. You are not building a case here — you are looking for a shape.

Nothing you tick is saved, sent or stored anywhere. This copy is yours.

RECOGNISE THE PATTERNS

Twenty-five questions.

1 What you are allowed to say

- ☐ You are interrupted or talked over, and other people are not.
- ☐ You raise something and it goes nowhere, repeatedly, with no reason given.
- ☐ Your emails and messages go unanswered, while others get replies.
- ☐ You are criticised in front of people, and praised — if at all — in private.
- ☐ You have started rehearsing ordinary sentences before you say them.

2 Who you are allowed to know

- ☐ People stopped meeting your eye, and you cannot say when it began.
- ☐ Conversations change or stop when you arrive.
- ☐ You were left out of something, then told you were imagining it.
- ☐ Someone who was friendly has gone cool, and will not say why.
- ☐ You have noticed that people are careful about being seen with you.

3 What people believe about you

- ☐ You are being gossiped about — not once, but incessantly.
- ☐ Something you said came back with the meaning changed.
- ☐ A concern was raised about you. Never to you.
- ☐ Your character is discussed in places where your work should be.
- ☐ Quick and careless assumptions are made about your ability.

4 What work you are given

- ☐ Work that was yours has quietly moved to someone else.
- ☐ You are given tasks far below what you can do, or nothing at all.
- ☐ You are given tasks that cannot be completed, then held to them.
- ☐ Information you need arrives late, incomplete, or not at all.
- ☐ A review appeared that matches no feedback you were ever given — or no feedback ever came.

5 What it is doing to you

- ☐ You are sleeping badly, or waking at the same hour every night.
- ☐ Sunday evening has a physical feeling attached to it.
- ☐ You are losing concentration on things you used to do easily.
- ☐ Your body has started producing symptoms your doctor cannot place.
- ☐ You have thought about whether the world would be easier without you in it.

If you ticked that last one, stop here and tell someone today.

United States — call or text **988**, the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, any hour.

Canada — call or text **988**, the Suicide Crisis Helpline, any hour.

United Kingdom — call **Samaritans on 116 123**, free, any hour.

You are not weak for being worn down by something designed to wear you down.

How long has this been going on?

- ☐ Under 3 months
- ☐ 3 to 6 months
- ☐ 6 months or more

WHEN IT HAS GONE FURTHER

Five that mean it has escalated.

- ❑ **Talk about your character has turned indecent.** It is no longer about your work or your conduct. It is about what sort of person you are — your morals, your sanity, your private life — and it is said to people who have never met you.
- ❑ **Things about you are circulating that you never made public.** Something you told one person in confidence, something from your file, something from your home life, now known by people who had no business being told.
- ❑ **The exclusion has stopped being social and become total.** Not just lunch and corridors — meetings, information, invitations, greetings. The absence is now complete enough to be policy.
- ❑ **Everyone holds a piece and nobody will give you theirs.** Each person knows one part of what has been decided about you. No single one of them will tell you, and each can honestly say they only knew a little.
- ❑ **Raising any of it makes you the problem.** The moment you name what is happening, the subject changes from their conduct to your reaction. This is the mechanism that keeps targets silent, and it is the most reliable sign of all.

If you are being followed, watched, or disturbed at home

Being stalked, having your home interfered with, or being deliberately deprived of sleep is **not mobbing and this guide cannot assess it**. It is either a crime or it needs a clinician — sometimes both, and the two are not always easy to tell apart from the inside, especially when you have been under sustained attack and are not sleeping.

Please do not use a checklist for this. iamstillchosen.com/safety lists who to contact and is honest about what it cannot do.

Leymann, in his own words — quoted, with the source below

“It occurs as schisms, where the victim is subjected to a systematic stigmatizing through, inter alia, injustices (encroachment of a person’s rights), which after a few years can mean that the person in question is unable to find employment in his/her specific trade. Those responsible for this tragic destiny can either be workmates or management.”

Leymann, H. (1990). *Mobbing and Psychological Terror at Workplaces*. Violence and Victims, 5(2), 119–126.

Cited as a source. The paper is Heinz Leymann’s work and is not mine. A copy is hosted at [mobbingportal.com/LeymannV&V1990\(3\).pdf](https://mobbingportal.com/LeymannV&V1990(3).pdf), which has no connection to Still Chosen.

READING WHAT YOU TICKED

It is the groups that move it.

Groups with at least one tick	/ 5
Items ticked in total	/ 25

- One group** Most likely one difficult person, or one difficult stretch. Real, and worth addressing — but it is not the pattern this guide is about.
- Two groups** Worth watching closely and worth dating from today. One person can reach into two parts of your life if they have enough authority.
- Three or more** This is the signature. Different parts of your life are being affected at once, which usually means more than one person is involved — whether or not they would describe themselves as involved.
- Six months plus** Duration matters as much as spread. Leymann's threshold was roughly six months, because that is where the damage stops being situational and starts being structural.

This is yours, and it stays that way

Nothing you tick is saved, sent or stored anywhere — not by me, not on this device. If you want to keep what you found, write it down somewhere that is yours.

It is meant to steady you, not stir you up. You are still capable of acting with dignity in the middle of this, and acting deliberately is the whole advantage you have left.

WHAT THIS IS NOT

Four things to do this week.

This is not a diagnosis. It is not evidence, and it will not stand up anywhere. It is not legal advice, and I am not a clinician. It is one thing only: a way of looking at a scattered set of small events and seeing whether they have a shape. That is worth something, because the scatter is the weapon.

- 1 Start dating things.** Today, not when it gets worse. One line per entry: the date, what happened, who was there. Facts only — not how it felt, which is the part that gets used against you. Keep it somewhere that is yours, not on anything your employer owns or can reach.
- 2 Tell one person outside it.** Not to get advice. To have one human being who knows the shape of it while it is happening, so that you are not the only witness to your own life. The single strongest predictor of recovering from this kind of harm is being believed by somebody.
- 3 Stop submitting evidence to people who already reached their verdict.** Every careful explanation, every extra hour, every attempt to be so obviously reasonable that they have to see it — that is the part costing you most, and it is the part that will never work. The verdict came first. The evidence was gathered afterwards to fit it.
- 4 Keep the record for someone who can actually act.** Stopping the arguing is not the same as stopping the recording. Your dated record is for whoever eventually has authority — a regulator, a union, a lawyer, a board. Keep it factual, keep it safe, and take advice before you hand it to anybody. In one survey only **35.6%** of targets ever protested, usually believing it would make things worse. They were often right. Knowing that in advance is not a reason to stay silent — it is a reason to be ready.

Number three is the hardest, and it is the one that gives you your life back.

Thank you for taking the time with this.

If you would like to keep going — thirty minutes with me, free, nothing decided on the call.

cal.com/still-chosen/consultation

For the live sessions and everything else: iamstillchosen.com/g

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