

## The Slam Club

The Slam Club is informal, existing any time two or more Slammers convene and compulsively denounce other people, places or things. Malcontents pervade our society, routinely sabotaging the good feelings normal people exchange. I call these killers of good feelings Slammers and their social groups the Slam Club. Incredibly, Slammers believe that opinions, when collective, are facts. They garner these collective opinions by socializing with other Slammers. Voila, Slam Club.

Phrased other ways, the Slam Club is complaining unto no purpose; it is hostility expressed without an intent to solve problems; it is criticism intended to preempt competitors from competing; it is the cowardice of words preferred to the courage of action; it is the egoism of opinion supplanting the neutrality of evidence; it is the usurping of research with the presumption of slander; it is meanness made routine; it is the magic thinking that words are deeds. Slammers earnestly believe that by slamming third parties to you, they are helping you. In fact they are precluding you from choosing for yourself of whom or what you will approve. And as such, Slammers compulsively try to control the uncontrollable: other people.

Slammers slam other people behind their backs. Slammers slam each other behind each other's backs. The Slam Club is predicated on the target not being present to defend him or herself. This crucial difference distinguishes Slammers from Normal People with worthy grievances against another person. A Normal Person confronts a wrongdoer or a mistakemaker directly, and gives them a chance to explain their actions and to apologize. Slammers want neither an explanation nor an apology, preferring to perpetuate the myth that the slammed is intrinsically unworthy. The terror of the direct confrontation is that the Slammer might be mistaken. And being emotionally incapable of apologizing, the Slammer chooses the illusion of being right over the reality that he or she might very well be wrong.

Thus the Slam Club tears to bits anyone not present, using faulty information as claws, incomplete information as teeth, and unproven information as muscle. You can not stop the hunt, you can not remove yourself from prey status, but know this: the Slam Club works like voodoo, you have to believe in it for it to affect you. Slammers can only hurt you with their denouncements if you believe those denouncements to be credible. If, and only if, you are a Slammer yourself do you take the Slam Club seriously.

The next time a Slammer entertains you with some vicious story about someone else, know that you are their next vicious story. The Slam Club spares no one their criticisms. Friend and foe alike are sliced and diced like so many human onions. This need not make you cry and here is why: it is not personal. I know this is hard to believe; after all, these people are your friends, are they not? No, oddly enough, they are not your friends. Slammers perceive all other persons as competitors. And that includes you. It is not personal. My experience is that Slammers do not say what they mean or mean what they say. Plainly, it is easier to complain about life than it is to upgrade your own. It is easier to watch soap operas than to write the great American novel. It is easier to watch the playoffs than organize your life.

There is a difference between a Slammer and an Abuser. An individual can be both, abusing those they can control and slamming those they cannot. But Slammers are not necessarily Abusers. Slammers and Abusers operate differently, and it will help you to recognize the distinctions.

"This is for your own good," may be alledged by either, but the Slammer will then compulsively denounce someone else, whereas the Abuser invades your physical person with accusations, fists, groping hands and, this last one must be included, charm. This first distinction is vital: Abusers engage in crimes that directly and physically affect the victim. Slammers may engage in slanderous or libelous behavior, and these certainly are crimes, but the bulk of slamming dwells well within the realm of small talk.

The next distinction is that Abusers apologize over and over and over again, promising to never repeat the abuse, then they do. Contrarily, you can certainly give Slammers credit for efficiency: they never apologize, but leap straight past to repetition. Another distinction is that Abusers know they lie. Slammers genuinely believe they are being truthful. Abusers are more dangerous, true, but their numbers are far less prevalent in our society. Which leads to my next point. You are far more likely to be the the victim of a Slammer than the victim of an Abuser.

Say you work in an office of 100 people. Chances are slim that any of them will ever strike you, call you names or sexually assault you. Given the same context of 100 employees, however, it is quite likely that any number of Slam Clubs exist throughout its ranks. Slamming may be more subtle than abuse, but its negative effects can spin an entire corporation into a downward spiral of work poorly done, tasks left unfinished, ideas squelched and profits lost.

It is the precise quality of its pervasiveness that makes slamming as large an issue as abuse, yet its dangers are not seen for what they are. Abusers cause trauma. Slammers cause unending contention. It is the difference between a sharp pain and a slow burn. The dynamic may be different, but the net result of ugliness between people is the same. This is why the public needs to understand the Slam Club: it hurts people. Just like abuse, it hurts people. Just like abuse, folks need to know what it is so that it can be stopped.

My book, "The Slam Club - Want To Change Your Life? Change Your Friends," helps you recognize Slammers and deal with them appropriately, not with more anger and more confrontation, but with calm retreat. You can indeed retrain your own behavior to get out of the Slam Club and move up into the Favor Network where life is good.

### About the Author

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