

How to Deal with *That* Kind of Boss

By Brooke Heath

Bad bosses. Most working professionals have had the misfortune of encountering them at some time or another in their careers, and if you haven't, consider yourself lucky!

If you work closely with your boss or supervisor, then much of the atmosphere and mood of your workplace depends on your relationship with your boss. If it is a positive mood and you love getting up, going to work, and facing your boss every day, then this article isn't for you. But if you hate going to work because you dread having to interact with your boss, then read on for tips on how to deal with him or her—and hopefully improve your situation.

Communicate!

Maybe the problem isn't exactly with your boss. Maybe it's a communication problem. Try asking for regular progress reports. This will allow you to cultivate a boss/employee relationship while giving you opportunities to sit down with your boss and bring him or her up to date on your work.

You could also try talking to your boss and explaining what you need in terms of feedback, support, and direction. This is not the time, however, to lash out and declare what a poor boss you think he or she is. This would be counterproductive with respect to what you are trying to accomplish. It may sound lame, but some bad bosses don't realize that their management skills are poor. So be tactful but strong.

Work Together.

Ask your boss how you can help him or her reach certain goals, or suggest that you work together on a project. Doing so may provide good opportunities for your boss to see how hard you work and that you are working with, rather than against, him or her. But remember that no one likes a kiss up, so don't take this teamwork to the extreme!

Go Over Your Boss's Head.

If you aren't getting results and you feel that you've tried every option to deal with the situation directly, it may be time to go to your boss's supervisor or someone in human resources, especially if you feel that your boss is treating you unlawfully.

Calmly describe exactly what your boss does and the impact his or her behavior is having on you and your job performance. Be prepared to give documentation of the dates, times, and circumstances. If your situation is serious enough, perhaps you could have someone who witnesses how the boss treats you go with you to talk to HR. This covers your side. Also, realize that once you make your case to the HR department, they will most likely talk to your boss about your concerns.

If your boss is reprimanded, you may not even know about it due to confidentiality, so be patient if you do not hear about an immediate result from taking this step.

The Last Resort

If none of the above steps helps and you absolutely cannot tolerate working with your boss any longer, you may want to consider asking to work in a different department. This shows that you enjoy working for your employer, just not your supervisor.

If this is not an option, consider looking for a new job. But before you give your notice, keep in mind that getting a job is not easy and that you should think things through before jumping ship. If you love everything about your job but your boss, then maybe grinning and bearing it is worth it. Realize that this is the hand you've been dealt and learn to play your cards.