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Simple Tips to deal with Tough Boss | Aparna Sharma | Senior HR Professional & Certified Corporate Director | Editor's Collection

In an ideal world, we would all have fantastic managers—bosses who helped us succeed, who made us feel valued, and who were just all-around great people.

Unfortunately, that's not always the case. But, whether the person you work for is a micromanager, has anger management problems, displays favoritism towards one person, is a flat-out workplace bully, or has his/her own insecurities, you still have to make the best of the situation and make it work as long as either of you are in the organisation together.

Here are a few simple tips which may help –

1. Identify Your Boss's Motivation



Understanding why your boss does or cares about certain things can give you insight into his or her management style.

Maybe it's not that he/she really cares about how long your lunch break takes; he/she actually cares about how it is perceived by other employees even though you're a performer.

2. Don't Let it Affect Your Work

No matter how bad your boss' behavior, avoid letting it affect your work. You want to stay on good terms with other leaders in the company (and keep your job!).

Don't try to even the score by working slower, or taking excessive 'sick leave' days or longer lunches. It will only put you further behind in your workload and build a case for your boss to give you the old heave-ho before you're ready to go.

3. Stay One Step Ahead

Especially when you're dealing with a micromanager, head off your boss' requests by anticipating them and getting things done before they come to you.

A great start to halting micromanagement in its tracks is to anticipate the tasks that your manager expects and get them done well ahead of time. If you reply, 'I actually already left a draft of the schedule on your desk for your review,' enough times, you'll minimize the need for reminders from them.

4. Set Boundaries

Working with someone who seems to have no boundaries means that you have to go ahead and set them.

One of the challenges of difficult people is that they come with equally difficult behavior—and it's important to learn how to distance yourself from that behavior. As Robert Frost said, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'

5. Stop Assuming They Know Everything

Just because someone has a managerial title doesn't mean that they have all the right answers, all the time.

I realized then that, just because someone is in a position of authority, doesn't mean he or she knows everything. From that point forward, I stopped assuming the title 'manager was equivalent to 'all knowing.'

6. Act as the Leader

When dealing with an insecure boss, sometimes it's best to make some leadership decisions on your own.

If you know your area well enough, there is no reason to not go ahead creating and pursuing a direction you know will achieve good results for your company. People who do this are naturally followed by their peers as an informal leader. Management, although maybe not your direct boss, will notice your initiative. Of course, you don't want to do something that undermines the boss, so keep him or her in the loop & do not rub them the wrong way.

7. Identify Triggers

If your boss has anger management problems, identify what triggers his/her meltdowns and be extra careful about avoiding those.

For example, if your editor flips when you misspell a source's name, be sure to double and triple-check your notes. And if your boss starts foaming at the mouth if you arrive a moment after 8 AM, plan to get there at 7:45—Every. Single. Day.

8. Use Tips from Couples' Therapy

When dealing with disagreement, pull on some tips from couple's therapy to work through the issue.

Simply repeat back to him/her what he/she said and ask "Is that what you meant?" (a standard trick ripped from couples' therapy). If he/she agrees to your recap, ask them to tell you more about it. When you repeat someone's perspective back to them, you give them a chance to expound and, crucially, to feel heard.

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