

## How to Handle a Bad Boss Situation

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# How to handle a bad boss situation

BY JoAnn R. Hines, Chief People Packager

In our climb up the corporate ladder, sooner or later, most of us encounter a bad boss. Bosses, of course, are only human and can have bad days, money problems or family crises, just like the rest of us. Or they might be dealing with a bad boss themselves. Often, though, unfortunately, they're just someone who's landed in the wrong position for his or her personality and experience.

A little prevention goes a long way in helping you deal with a bad boss: Manage the situation, rather than allowing it to manage you. Abstain from displaying negative behavior, and keep focused on building your own career. Don't let someone who's less on the ball than you are drive you away from a job that you love and are good at.

Below are five typical bad-boss personality types, plus strategies for dealing with each one.

**The Idiot.** Idiots make you wonder how in the world they ever became managers in the first place. Their decisions are not well thought out, and, in many cases, their thought processes are just plain stupid or uninformed. It's difficult to fathom how they think; consequently, you can't anticipate what they want from you. Your best course of action is to distance yourself as much as possible. You don't want guilt by association. But you still need to make them look good.



**The Back-Stabber.** These bosses praise everything you do. Then they speak negatively about you behind your back. It's helpful to clear the air with Back-stabber Bosses. Don't internalize the hurt. Ask to speak with them privately. Tell the truth and don't mince words. It may not alleviate the problem, but at least they will know where you stand. Chances are, once they recognize that you are aware of their behavior and that you will stand your ground, they will be less likely to repeat their actions.

**The Glory Hog.** Glory Hogs are insecure in the position of authority they hold. They take credit for everything that is accomplished by those under their command. The better you make

this boss look, the better your relationship becomes. I'm not saying that you need to give away all the glory. It's your responsibility to get credit for the things that you do. Just be sure to mention your boss and your team leader. Acknowledge that the project was a success, because you worked for X and that X was behind the scenes all the way.



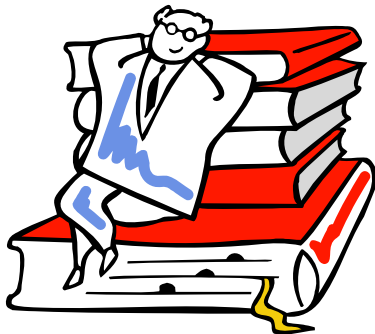
**The Parent.** This boss is overly protective, trying to hold you back from accepting challenges, so you're not at risk of making mistakes. Unfortunately, this type of boss won't allow you to grow, either. The best way to work with this type of boss is to continually push for more changes and responsibility. Document your successes. Demonstrate why you should be given a shot at more difficult assignments. If you have testimonials from customers or clients about your performance, use them. If they want to play parent, make them proud of you.

**The Lunatic.** There's no understanding or predicting what this type of boss will do from one day to the next. Typically, Lunatics have a short fuse. They tend to get angry or lash out unreasonably at colleagues. Don't stoop to their level by arguing or complaining. Keep a cool head and a closed mouth. If any exchange gets overheated, just excuse yourself. Better to remove yourself from the situation than to say something you will really regret.



Hail to These Chiefs! Count Yourself Lucky If You Have One of These . . .

**The Coach.** This boss is motivational and inspiring. He or she will constantly challenge you to aspire to new levels and is quick to recommend you to other associates. The Coach's desire for you to achieve success may occasionally get you in over your head, so be sure that you are up to the task whenever accepting a new opportunity.



**The Teacher.** This boss is very patient and understanding and really wants you to learn your job and the business. Sometimes the Teacher can be too understanding and not give you enough rope to make your own mistakes or decisions.

**The Mentor.** This boss (usually a man) has an open-door policy. One caution: don't go to your Mentor every time you have a difficult decision to make. Save the ear time for when you really have a problem that seems insurmountable.

Bosses, good or bad, come and go. The important thing is to remain flexible and look to the future. If you have a bad boss, the next one may be a superlative one. Most important, don't let a bad boss affect your job performance. Figure out how to make the best of the circumstances, and learn from the experience how to be the best kind of boss, when your turn comes.

Regards,



**JoAnn**

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