

5 Tips for Dealing with a Difficult Boss



Introduction

What you need to realize is that if you're having a challenge with the boss, it may bring down your morale, but you have to remember, it's not about you. But it is about you making adjustments; adjustments in attitude, accepting the situation for what it is, and determining what you can do. Any relationship is a two-way street. So, once you realize what some of the options are, once you begin to change the dynamic of how you interact with the boss, then it's bound to change. And most likely for the better.

There has to be a “Magical Shift” from:

My boss needs to change or I am going to leave!

to:

What can I do to change the situation?

You may think well, it's the boss that has the negative, why not have the boss change? How realistic is that? Who is going to make him change? Who is going to make her change? So the recourse you have is to change how you approach this boss. You are in control of your behaviour and you can change it accordingly.

Here are 5 tips to use to improve your situation. By the way, using these techniques is not limited to dealing with a problem boss. They can be used in any type of relationship where problems exist.

1. Ice-breaking Questions

One of the first ways you can break the ice with a challenging boss in particular the controlling type of boss, is to ask questions. I know it may be hard because sometimes when you are dealing with a challenging boss you may want to avoid this person. But sometimes if you just bite the bullet and do it, you'll find it may have some magical results. The questions that you can ask are things like, how is it going? It's simple, how was your day, how is it going? How can I help with something? If you know there is a crisis going on, offer your assistance. Ask his or her opinion, what do you think? He may be very forthcoming with information because you approached him. He or she knows that you might be trying to avoid him or her and that many people in the group are trying to avoid him. But if you step up to the plate and talk to the person, then that will break the ice.

2. Find a Positive Point of Reference

If you use the ice-breaking questions, you will get to know the boss and find the human side of him. It would also be important to find a common ground from which to start. Ask the ice-breaking questions to find the common ground. The common ground could be as simple as finding out if this person likes golf. Talk to the person about golf. Or if the person has pictures of his or her children in the office; then ask about the children. In my case, I had a controlling boss and I noticed he had lots of pictures of a golden retriever in his office. When I asked about the dog, he was very forthcoming with information. He told me a lot about the dog and then later on when the dog was sick, he came and talked to me about that as well. That was our common ground from which to start, and it was something as simple as that. Or it could be something that's work-related, either way it is important to find this common ground. And remember you both have this common ground anyway and that's getting the job done.

3. Try to See the World from the Boss' Point of View

Try to see the world from your boss's perspective. For example, suppose she has just been hired into the job and she is your new boss. I am willing to bet she is daunted by this new adventure. Remember when you first started the job—did it make you nervous? And what if you just moved from a different city? A little empathy can go a long way! When you start to think about your boss in a more empathic perspective, it will improve your perspective about the boss.

4. Is There A Time To Avoid The Boss?

Avoid interaction when tired or hungry or angry. If you are tired, work at getting more sleep because it is going to be very important to deal with a challenging boss in a very even manner. I know this type of boss can trigger a reaction in you and you don't want to over react. Avoid interaction when you are hungry. I know when I'm hungry I'm pretty grouchy. The best thing to do is to have a snack, a healthy snack, not a sugary snack because that will bring your sugar level down very quickly after the initial boost and you will be back to where you started from. A healthy snack, a fruit, some nuts, something like that is best. Avoid interaction when you are angry, if you have already been triggered, then the best thing to do is to take a bio break, and then while in there, take some deep breaths --inhale deeply and exhale slowly. This will by definition bring you down from the angry feeling. Sometimes that's not feasible, so do the best you can. These do's and don'ts are very important in being able to get along with a challenging boss.

5. Why is Journaling Important?

Journaling will help you get your feelings out in a safe manner. It keeps us from bottling up feelings inside that can become explosive later on or worse yet, lead to detrimental health effects. It also helps to document what is going on in case you ever need it. It would be a good idea to have two journals. One to use for getting feelings out and the other to document interactions with a challenging boss.

Parting Thoughts

Any interaction is a dance, kind of like a mobile that works on a delicate balance. However, when one changes how one interacts with another, that mobile becomes imbalanced and causes a need for the others to make changes in how they respond. From that standpoint, things have to change. If you use some of these techniques, more than likely things will change for the better. But it does take time, and time is a four letter word!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at ylf@carolina.rr.com.

Stay tuned, coming soon - free webinar, "My Boss Drives Me Crazy". I will share some proven techniques to deal with three of the most common challenging bosses.