

10 ways to deal with a toxic boss

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Despite the difficult circumstances of the pandemic, there were great, compassionate leaders who not only supported but actively assisted their subordinates in fulfilling their jobs.

Many employers or bosses, unfortunately, were not great. They were either obstinate, disrespectful, or micromanaging, or all three at once. According to experts, many of these toxic employers are unlikely to improve even when the pandemic is over.

According to studies, having a strained relationship with your boss is detrimental to your productivity and mental health. According to researcher Abigail Phillips of the University of Manchester Business School, when managers lack empathy and act narcissistic, it increases "the prevalence of workplace bullying, counterproductive work behaviour, job dissatisfaction, psychological distress, and depression among subordinate employees."

According to a University of Michigan study, those subjected to "rudeness" at work, such as condescending remarks, put-downs, and sarcasm, are more psychologically exhausted. This can lead to "incivility spirals," in which the victims of ill behaviour begin to behave badly themselves. Due to lost output and work time, the average annual impact on businesses is \$14,000 per employee. Employee attrition is a result of terrible supervisors. In fact, according to a Gallup poll, half of the adults polled have quit a job to avoid working with a manager at some time in their lives.

Why Bad People Managers Become People Managers

When employees do well, management wants to reward them with a promotion, which frequently entails appointing them people managers even if they've never had a management position before.

"Leadership wants to elevate them," said Avery Blank, a leadership specialist and business consultant. "However, the higher you advance, the more people you'll oversee." "It's a logical equation that you have to promote individuals for them to develop in their careers and higher-level employees often have to manage people."

Organisations should consider various methods for promoting and rewarding high performers (especially those who lack leadership skills). Allow them to be a superstar salesperson if they excel at being a sales representative. Give them the most complicated IT challenges and higher pay if they excel at IT. Alternatively, train them to be better leaders.

Avery Blank once said, "There is a scarcity of people management training for mid-level managers, particularly in-house training". "Most companies invest much in the development of early-career professionals and leaders, but not so much in mid-level managers."

10 ways to deal with toxic bosses

Don't be alarmed if you find yourself working for a challenging boss. These ten tactics will help you deal with even the most horrible and demanding bosses.

- **Decide to leave the organisation or stay**

Making a realistic decision about whether to stay or resign is the first step in coping with a toxic employer. If you're feeling stuck, assess how much the circumstance is affecting you emotionally and mentally. If you decide to stay, you'll need to create some coping mechanisms to mitigate the negative effects of their actions on your mental health.

- **Do the work: Don't be a target**

Avoid becoming a target or, by extension, a victim if you decide to stay. You may believe that this entails putting your head down and staying out of trouble, but it can also imply the exact opposite. Please carry out your responsibilities and perform them well. Consider going to whatever length to assist your boss's success (but don't feel obligated to do so). It will make you less of a target, and people will notice your professionalism in the face of bad leadership.

Yes, you may be able to improve your boss's image in the eyes of their superiors, and as a result, they

may be promoted. However, if they get promoted away from you, it may not be that bad.

- **Know your rights**

Never forget that you have rights at work. When your employer's actions infringe on your rights, speak up. Allow them to make adjustments by communicating with them.

- **Focus on what you can control**

When working with a tough or poisonous person, keep in mind that the only person you have power over is yourself and that attempting to manage the other person is fruitless. If you have faith in other senior leaders, seek their advice and assistance; if your faith has been undermined, look for an organisation that shares your values and has a healthy, supportive culture.

- **Don't get drawn in**

Toxic people enjoy dragging you into their drama. Don't get taken in by it.

Keep a safe emotional barrier between you and them. Be courteous, truthful, and forthright. Maintaining a safe emotional distance involves isolating oneself from them by refusing to be affected by their unpleasant behaviours or actions while operating professionally and competently.

They may find this irritating at first, but by keeping things strictly professional, they are limited in their ability to manipulate you and get under your skin. Try to think of them as just another part of your job, like the continually jamming printer or the bad coffee from the vending machine.

- **Focus on clarity, candidness, and control**

A toxic boss frequently has weak communication skills. They can be forthright, but their expectations are mixed. Focus on the three Cs in these situations: clarity, candour, and control. Clarify your specific issues, have an open and honest talk with your manager about them and maintain control over your reaction to their response. Finally, what you discover will help you decide whether to stay or leave.

- **Don't gossip**

Distancing yourself from the cause will help you maintain your sanity. This entails recognising the harmful person as separate from yourself.

Even if you don't like or respect them, don't make fun of them. Emotional intelligence is demonstrated through speaking favourably of others, or at the very least resisting the impulse to speak ill of other people. If you must vent, do so outside of the office.

If your co-workers are also suffering, you can help by listening with an open mind, but make sure any discussions don't deteriorate into bitterness or personal attacks. Consider involving HR if you believe there is a valid case for bullying, intimidation, or harassment, which brings us to my next point.

- **Keep detailed records**

Keep careful, accurate records if you are the victim of inappropriate or abusive behaviour, and don't embellish.

You may be asked to back up a complaint, whether it's your own or someone else's. In either scenario, your ability to make specific, comprehensive allusions to personal experiences can help you make a stronger case.

Vague references, unsupported anecdotes, gossip, and third-party opinions do little to alleviate your challenge. Your case will be strengthened if you can demonstrate a pattern of hazardous behaviour through verified evidence. You're not going to get very far if you don't keep precise and accurate

records.

- **Don't derail your career**

Your career being disrupted is the last thing you want to do or allow to happen to you. This means executing your work to the best of your ability and not allowing the toxic leader to use you as a target.

This may necessitate biting your tongue. It may also imply that you must complete or repeat work that you do not believe is necessary. The key is to keep your head down, remain out of trouble, and wait for the problem to resolve itself. People have argued on this point, claiming that employees should speak out about terrible treatment by their direct supervisor. When people have a strong and valid point, they should speak up. However, speaking up against subjective work standards or a boss's "leadership style" is difficult to do. The steps taken against the dysfunctional manager are typically modest or non-existent.

Some have personally witnessed an employee lose in such a situation and become persona non grata as a result. We have seen promotions stalled and educational chances delayed or withdrawn in the worst-case scenarios. Take a long-term look at this. As we mentioned in the first point, you must make a stay or go decision for yourself, and if you stay, you may have to deal with some problematic situations.

- **Assume positive intent**

Assume positive intent if you're having problems with your boss. Talk to your co-workers who you think would get along well with them and find out how they manage to be effective. If it doesn't work, have the bravery to confront them about how their actions have affected you. You better understand their motivations at best, and you have made your voice heard at worst.

- **Remember, it's not forever**

The need for greater power, status, and control drives many toxic leaders to change positions regularly, so you may not have to cope with the toxicity for long. While you wait for them to finish, work on improving your abilities and expanding your network so that you may find a new job if necessary.

Finally, if you're wondering why businesses accept toxic people in leadership positions, you're not alone. The problem is that these kinds of dysfunctional leaders are usually quite excellent at presenting a positive image upwards in the company. Political manoeuvring, glossing over or blaming others for previous faults, and manipulating people's emotions are all skills they have.

During the hiring process, a charming and engaging prospect might easily fool an inexperienced hiring manager. It's sometimes too late to do anything about their behaviour once they're comfortably inside the business and over the probation term. I hope you never have to work for a bad boss, but these tips should help if you do.

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