



Mind-Easy

# 10 Tips: Dealing With a Stressful Boss



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, shows favoritism toward one person, is a flat-out workplace bully, or just isn't very competent, you still have to make the best of the situation and get your job done.

# **1. Make Sure You're Dealing With a "Bad Boss"**

Before trying to fix your bad boss, make sure you really are dealing with one. Is there a reason for her behavior, or are you being too hard on him or her?

"Observe your boss for a few days and try to notice how many things she does well versus poorly. When she is doing something "bad," try to imagine the most forgiving reason why it could have occurred. Is it truly her fault, or could it be something out of her control?"

## **2. Identify Your Boss' Motivation**

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

“...if the rules are totally out of control, try to figure out your boss' motivation. Maybe it's not that he really cares about how long your lunch break takes; he actually cares about how it looks to other employees and their superiors.”

### **3. 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 'mental health' 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.”

## 4. Stay One Step Ahead

Especially when you're dealing with a micromanager, head off your boss' requests 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 her reminders. She'll realize that you have your responsibilities on track—and that she doesn't need to watch your every move."

## 5. 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 unlikable people is that they come with equally unlikable behavior—and it’s important to learn how to distance yourself from that behavior. As Robert Frost said, ‘Good fences make good neighbors.’”

## **6. 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.'

."

## **7. Act as the Leader**

When dealing with an incompetent 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. Of course, you don't want to do something that undermines the boss, so keep him or her in the loop.

## 8. Identify Triggers

If your boss has anger management problems, identify what triggers her meltdowns and be extra militant 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.”

## **9. Use Tips from Couples' Therapy**

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

“Simply repeat back to him what he said and ask “Is that what you meant?” (a standard trick ripped from couples' therapy).

If he agrees to your recap, ask him to tell you more about it. When you repeat someone's perspective back to him, you give him a chance to expound and, crucially, to feel heard.”