



DIVERSITY TOOLKIT

How To Manage Your Boss

NUDC Career Strategy Series by Laurie Dowling

Today's Webinar

- Getting to Know You – The Landscape
- Know Thyself – Who is My Boss? What Does She Want From Me? What Do I Want From Her?
- Tell Me Why – Why Does She Act This Way? How Can We Understand Each Other?
- I'd Rather Be Right – When is Discretion the Better Part of Valor?
- My Boss is the Devil – Working with Challenging Supervisors
- Managing the Boss – Wrap Up & Questions

Your Boss

- A. I love my boss. We are in sync and I feel both supported and engaged.
- B. My boss is okay, but sometimes she doesn't judge **me** correctly or **her** choices don't make sense.
- C. I would say that my boss isn't my biggest fan. We seem to be at cross purposes a lot and I feel like there is a target on my back.
- D. My boss is the devil.

Know Thyself (and Thy Boss)



The Temple of Apollo at Delphi

Who is My Boss?

- Sun Tzu said that a good spy is more valuable than an army of 100,000. This is not to suggest you're going to war with your boss (though in extreme cases that may happen), but that information allows you to behave in a strategic way.
- How much do you know about your supervisor? Have you read her resume? Looked up her posts, blogs, or tweets? Are you connected on LinkedIn? To whom else is she connected? Who are listed as her influencers? How does that coincide with yours?

What Do You Want To Know?

- What kind of research do you perform when you're looking at working with a potential client or internal customer? Have you conducted that research on your boss?
- **What else do you need to know about your boss?** Please type your answers in the chat box as well as any of the sources you use for such research.

What Does My Boss Want?

Scholars ranging from Gabarro and Kotter of Harvard to researchers with the American Psychological Association all suggest that a key point for managing a boss is to understand what she needs. Here is a short list from my perspective as a manager, you may have similar needs from your reports.

- 1. No Surprises Part 1.** The responsibilities you have roll up into responsibilities of mine. I need to be able to rely on your getting your work done when it's due and at a quality that reflects well on both you and me. My boss expects this of me and I expect it of you.
- 2. No Surprises Part 2.** I need to be in the loop with anything that affects me or our division/department. Don't go around me to the CEO, don't forget to copy me on reports or communication, and don't undertake strategic projects that you haven't run by me – they may not fit into the firm's long term goals as articulated by my boss and her boss.

What Does My Boss Want?

3. **Proactivity.** Let me know about the status of projects or operations you're leading and where you may need help from the firm before there is a time crunch. If you need help to complete a project we can all pull together, but we're all busy and we need to have as much notice as possible.
4. **Trust.** This is a 2-way street. I need to trust you and I want you to trust me. I would like you to work with me to develop this.
5. **Team Spirit.** We're all in this together, so I want you to be collegial and helpful with your colleagues and with me. You don't have to like each other, but I expect you to be civil, pleasant and professional.
6. **Method of Communication.** Don't relay crucial information by text if she prefers to talk on the phone or in person. Find out her preference and use it and encourage your team to do so.



What Does My Boss Want?

What else do you think your boss wants or do you want as boss?

Please type into the chat box.

What Do I Want From My Boss?

1. **R.E.S.P.E.C.T.** I agree with Aretha, it's one of the most important things. I'm smart, I'm talented please respect my abilities.
2. **Information.** Keep me in the loop. Don't just feed me just-in-time information, share with me the strategic goals, not only for our department but for the firm.
3. **Proactivity.** Give me lead time for the projects and responsibilities you're giving me. Please don't keep making projects urgent that could have been planned.

What Do I Want From My Boss?

4. **Thank Me and My Team.** I give 110% to make sure that the quality of my work and that of my reports is top notch. I would like you to recognize this and thank us for it. (You can put it in my file, too.)
5. **Have My Back.** Treat and speak of me with respect and enthusiasm when I'm not in the room.
6. **Take Responsibility.** Some bosses blame their own mistakes on others. Please don't do that.

What Do I Want From My Boss?

What else would you want from your boss?

Please type into the chat box.

“Tell Me Why”



–John Lennon

Why Does She Act This Way?

Communication Styles

- We each have one or more ways in which we're most comfortable communicating and which influence how we respond to situations. There are a number of tools that can be used to examine this for individuals and groups.
- Perhaps your company uses **DISC**, **Big 5** or the **SDI**. These tools can often provide excellent insights into the way someone will behave in a certain situation. With some it can be like having an "owner's manual" that you can share with your colleagues.
- Does your company use such a tool? If so, is your report available to your boss? Is her report available to you? Have you ever used similar information to help you get to know your boss or direct reports?

Long Ago: Laurie's Boss

- Some years ago my supervisor and I sat in a class together and participated in an exercise that measured what motivated each of us to do our jobs. We had only worked together for a couple of weeks so we shared our results from the brief test.
- It turns out that my boss' primary motivators were reward – being compensated and publicly praised for successful work. Mine were diametrically opposite, I was not motivated by reward but by being privately thanked for my work.
- This early insight showed us how we were different, but how we also could be complementary. It was a key moment in our interaction and led to a very positive working relationship.

Long Ago: Laurie's Boss

- I was fortunate that my supervisor used the information to help him keep me motivated and engaged. I used the information to make sure that I gave him credit for the good work of our division.
- A subsequent supervisor did not believe in praising his team members or acknowledging when they had successfully negotiated a tricky problem. His management philosophy was more focused on “what have you done for me lately?”
- Ultimately, I felt unappreciated in my position and left the firm.

What Should Laurie Have Done?

What could I have done to help him manage me better? What would you suggest I do?

- A. Approach my new boss and tell him about how I can best be motivated?
- B. Ask my new boss to join me in taking the brief test I took with my old boss.
- C. Suck it up, this is business and you need a tougher skin.
- D. You did right, ultimately you have to be happy and feel appreciated where you are.

Communicating With The Boss

How do you create an open communication line with your boss or your direct reports?

- A. I request regular meetings to talk about the work and the process.
- B. I prefer real time course correction and I tell my boss and my team this.
- C. I prefer end of project “post mortems” instead.
- D. I let my boss set the communication process. I can adapt to it.

(You may choose more than one answer.)

Receiving Feedback

Marshall Goldsmith is one of the world's leading executive consultants, working primarily with Fortune 100 CEOs. He coaches to that feedback is a gift and that our supervisors, clients, etc., don't have to give us the information we need to do better. He recommends the following behavior when receiving feedback.

1. 1. Listen carefully and attentively.

2. 2. Say Thank You.

- That's it. Don't try to justify the points, don't explain how wrong the person talking with you is. Questions may be asked for clarification but mostly you listen and learn. If the feedback is about something you did complete or turned in that wasn't seen, then it's okay to clarify that. But Marshall suggests we remember that feedback is a gift.

Receiving Feedback

- Speaking from my own experience, this is not easy. The temptation to justify or to disagree is very great. But using the behavior suggested by Marshall is very powerful, since most people expect disagreement or justification.
- Feedback is a gift. There is data from multiple industries to show that for women and people of color, sometimes the feedback that would be most helpful – about how we can be a clear asset to the firm – is not given. When queried, the person who could have given insight expressed concern that sharing it would make them appear prejudiced, sexist or racist.

Receiving Feedback

For myself, if I can learn that executives at my new company are not taken seriously if they don't wear a business suit every day, I am very grateful for that important but unwritten information if it will help me show my readiness.

Have you ever experienced this?

- 1. Yes**
- 2. No**

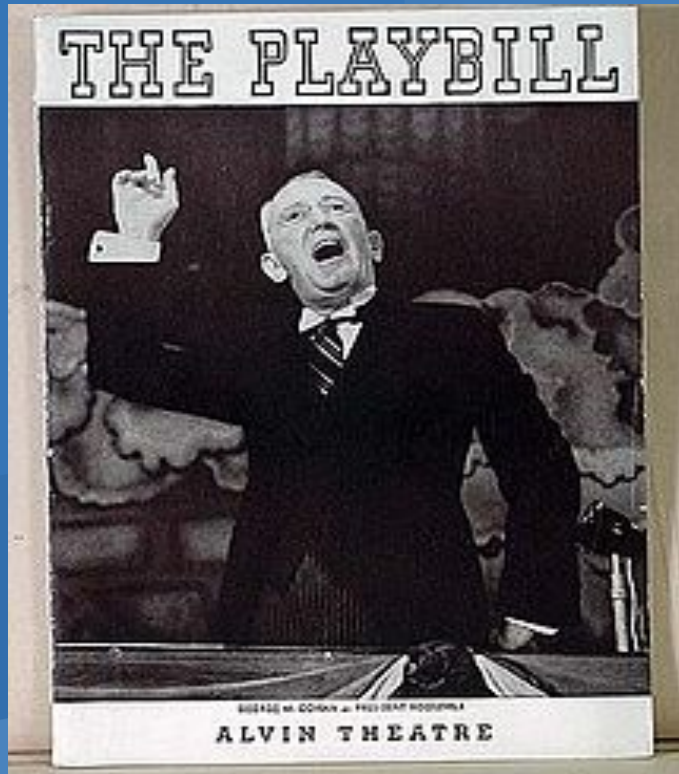
How do you show you are open to receiving feedback from your boss or others? (type in chat box)

“Clean Talk”

- Jorge Cherbosque, PhD of UCLA refers to “clean talk” as a way of discussing topics that can be difficult or uncomfortable. Clean talk, like appreciative inquiry, utilizes emotional intelligence by removing any judgmental aspect to the topic at hand.
- Clean talk assumes good will on the part of all parties and allows them to share information and insights that can be vital to the success of the individual or group.
- To be effective, the participants have to agree on some clean talk ground rules, of course.

Have you ever used this technique? Did you find it useful or unwieldy?

“I’d Rather Be Right”



-Rodgers & Hart

“I'd rather be right than influential, I'd rather be right than wealthy and wise”

(FYI, this was a musical about Franklin Roosevelt)

Can You Be Right Too Often?

Marshall Goldsmith works almost exclusively with CEOs and Chairs. Here is a scenario he uses with his clients.

- You're going out to dinner with your spouse. You want to go to Chez Chez, a restaurant where you have had great meals. Your spouse wants to go to La Maison de la Casa House, a groovy new place. The spouse wins. The food is bad there, the service is worse. And the valet parker is a pain, too.

What do you do and say?

- A. I told you we should have gone to Chez Chez, we would have had a wonderful meal.
- B. Don't say anything. Or if you can swing it, "thank you honey for getting us out of our rut."

Can You Be Right Too Often?

How does this bear out in our professional lives? Can it have an impact? Have you ever had a boss who always had to be right? Have you ever felt the pull of “I’m right, I win!” in your own professional life?

How do you handle it?

- A. I go with it. It’s important that people know I was right all along.
- B. I use this super power judiciously. If it’s a situation where my reputation would be soiled if people thought I wasn’t right, then I speak.
- C. It depends on the setting. I would not do this in a public meeting.
- D. My mama said, “If you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything at all,” and I follow that teaching.



My Boss is the Devil



“You’re a mean one, Mr. Grinch...”

Working With Challenging Supervisors

Sometimes You're Not Crazy

- We've probably all had one. The boss that truly seems to be out to get you. Or is completely irrational. Or maybe is just so over her head that she is managing you and the team poorly.
- For me, my "bad boss" was the person who would greet your "good morning" with a similar reply one day and "what do you mean by that?" the next. Just no way to tell which person was going to come to work. It was like walking on egg shells.

Managing a Boss Who's Insecure

Question: My boss behaves in a petty manner with me and seems to try to catch me in mistakes. I think somehow my expertise makes her feel insecure. What can I do to make this work?

Many of us have been there with a boss who may not have the experience we have and seems threatened by our knowledge.

- Have you had this experience?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No

Managing a Boss Who's Insecure

Ideas for Managing This Boss—

1. If your expertise and experience is making your boss nervous, perhaps you can help her see you as a valuable resource rather than a threat. WIFM (What's in it for me) is a very powerful motivator for most people. Is there a way you can help her see that having your skill is an asset to “her” team? Can you build trust with her through regular check ins about direction and timing on your projects?
2. Group ideas. Have you encountered this situation? What suggestions do you have for how to handle this?

Please type in the chat box.

Should I Stay or Should I Go?

Is there ever a situation where you should stay when you have a bad boss?

- A. Yes, if you love the rest of your job.
- B. Yes, if you are close to a milestone – vesting, retirement.
- C. Yes, if you think you can outlast her.
- D. No way, run while you still have all your limbs!

Please type your bad boss story or question into the chat box.

Finale-Managing the Boss



If you want to be a rock n roll star...

The Best Boss

Think back to the best boss you've ever had. What made that relationship so positive?

- A. Communication. We really were in sync.
- B. Trust. I would have walked over hot coals for her and she always had my back.
- C. Had My Back. She was the person who sang my praises when I wasn't in the room.
- D. Reward. She made sure that I was praised and compensated for my great work.

The Best Boss

- My best boss told me, “I hired you for your skill and good sense. Use it to run this project. If you have questions, see a strategic area that you think I will have an opinion on, or need my help, come to me. Otherwise, just keep me in the loop.” It was bliss and I grew so much with that level of trust.
- What’s your best boss story? Please type in the chat box and we’ll share (without attribution).

Managing the Boss

1. Know your motivations and what you want
2. Understand those of your boss as well
3. Be aware of how best to communicate with her
4. Develop a regular and “clean” flow of communication
5. Show openness to receiving information
6. Don't go to war with your boss unless you know you can win

Put on Your Own Mask First

- All of the tools we've just gone over are keys to successfully managing your boss.
- But most important to remember is that your first duty – before your team or your company – is to making sure you are in a good place. The flight attendants are right on this one. **Put on your own mask first.**
- And if you know that the situation is toxic, and it sometimes is, work your network and keep your ears open for other options.

Question Time



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Resources

Managing Your Boss, the American Psychological Association. www.apa.org

Managing Your Boss, John Gabarro & John Kotter, HBR 2005

What Got You Here Won't Get You There, Marshall Goldsmith, 2007 www.marshallgoldsmith.com

The Prince, Nicola Machiavelli, 1513

The Art of War, Sun Tzu, 5th Century BCE