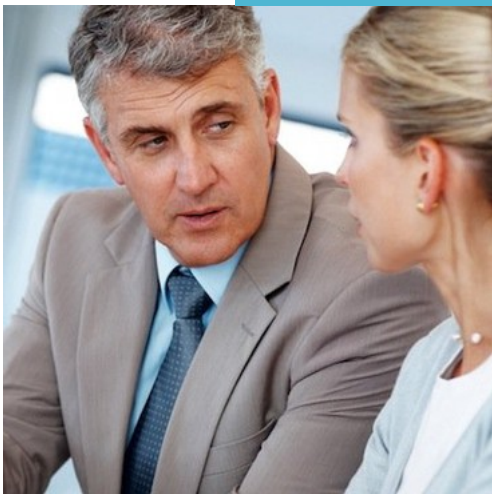


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10 Brilliant Tips for Dealing With a Difficult Boss

By [The Daily Muse Editor](#)

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](#), or just isn't very competent, you still have to make the best of the situation and get your job done.

To help out, we've gathered the best advice from around the web for dealing with a difficult manager. Try one or more of these tips to find some common ground with your boss—or at least stay sane until you find a new gig.

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?

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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.

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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.

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4. Stay One Step Ahead

Especially when you're dealing with a micromanager, head off your boss' requests by anticipating them and 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.

[Read More on Managing a Micromanager](#)

5. Document Everything

Make sure to document interactions with your boss—be it requests or criticisms—so you can refer back to them if she ever contradicts herself.

When your boss asks you for something, get it in writing. You need to create a paper trail of all requests as well as everything you produce. If your boss is the type who gives you directions verbally, follow up with an email that outlines the discussion to ensure that you heard everything correctly. Cover yourself at all times and be prepared to pull out your documented proof if your boss questions your outputs.

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6. Wait it Out

Dealing with a conflict? Make sure to give it some time before reacting.

Timing is often everything when managing conflict with a boss. Sometimes it makes more sense to wait it out than confront the situation head on. If your boss has a lot on her plate this month, her stress level may be high and she might not take as kindly to your issues.

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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. Management, although maybe not your direct boss, will notice your initiative. Of course, you don't want to do something that undermines the boss, so keep him or her in the loop.

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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.

[Read More on Dealing With Toxic Bosses](#)

9. Use Tips from Couples' Therapy

When dealing with disagreement, pull on some tenants from 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.

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10. Avoid Future Bad Bosses

When interviewing with a new company, do your research ahead of time to make sure you're not getting into another situation with a less-than-ideal manager.

Have coffee or lunch with one or more staffers at the new company. Ostensibly, your purpose is to learn general information about the company and its culture. However, use this opportunity to discover as much about your potential boss as possible, without appearing creepy, of course.

[Read More from Inc.](#)

Tell us! What are your tips for dealing with a difficult boss?

Photo of [boss and employee courtesy of Shutterstock](#).

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