

How to Deal With an Ignorant Boss

by Freddie Silver



The most perfect job can soon become unbearable when your boss is difficult. Bosses can be problematic for many different reasons, and understanding what makes them tick is the start to learning how to deal with them. If you find yourself in the unfortunate situation of having an ignorant boss -- someone who doesn't even realize how detrimental his behavior is -- there are things you can do to help yourself cope.

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Rudeness

Ignorant bosses have not learned the golden rule about catching more flies with honey than vinegar. They may be loud, brash and insensitive to the feelings of those around them. Insults and public chastisement are commonplace with this type of supervisor. Realize this is your boss' failing and don't take it personally. Don't react emotionally even when you are the target of her wrath. Stay calm and polite. Choose a quiet moment alone with your boss and tell her that in future you'd appreciate being spoken to privately and in a gentler fashion. Choose your words and tone carefully. Model the behavior she should have, and make the effort to be respectful and soft-spoken.

Negativity

Some ignorant bosses ooze negativity about everyone and everything. They are likely to criticize their subordinates as well as their superiors. They will point out the downside of new company policy even if they are attempting to implement it. While it can be very demoralizing to work in such an atmosphere, hold on to your own optimistic viewpoint. See her negativity as a personal challenge to yourself to see the opposite point of view. When she highlights the negatives in a situation, find the positives and introduce her to them. Doing this in a humorous way may be even more effective.

Incompetence and Laziness

New bosses usually require a "breaking-in" period as they learn the ropes and adjust to their new position. Lie low, do your work and try to interact with your new boss only when you have to until she becomes more comfortable and knowledgeable. If there's no improvement after a few months, she's probably the kind of supervisor who is lazy, doesn't care to do well or is unable to meet the demands of her position. While you wait for her supervisors to recognize this, consider picking up some of the slack. Welcome the opportunity to get valuable experience you otherwise wouldn't have access to. It will enhance your resume and could lead to a promotion for you.

Selfishness and Ego

Ignorant bosses who are selfish and driven by their inflated egos can be dangerous. Stealing ideas from their underlings and passing them off as their own are not beneath them. They will do whatever they see as necessary to make themselves look good. Be constantly on guard with this type of boss. Record and document everything you do. Put your name on submitted reports and send copies of your emails to co-workers or other supervisors.

Enough Is Enough

The time might come when despite all your efforts, your boss' behavior has not improved and the stress is taking its toll on you. It might then be necessary to "blow the whistle" on your ignorant boss. Select one of her supervisors that you believe will be sympathetic to your concerns and outline the inappropriate behaviors that have occurred. Remember to speak dispassionately and stick to the facts, despite how emotionally charged the situation might have become for you. You will appear more credible if you present the information in a professional manner. If reporting your boss doesn't help, it's probably a good idea to look for a new job.

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