

# What to do when you have a difficult boss

I generally believe most people mean well, and simply execute their job poorly every now and then. But sometimes there are difficult bosses. Do you know what to do when you have a difficult boss?

This resource is intended to address the most common issues with a difficult boss and the steps you can take to reduce the impact on you – both personally and professionally. The problems we face when we have a difficult boss are almost too numerous to mention, but the two biggest of these issues are:

1. They can negatively impact our work performance.
2. They can make life miserable.

These two issues alone make it worth trying to figure out how to work more effectively with our boss, even when they are difficult. There is a catch-all term we use regarding bosses and co-workers called “being difficult.” It’s not too specific to exactly know what the issue is.

Sometimes, when we are in the midst of a constant barrage from the difficult boss, it’s hard to know exactly where the difficulty may lie. All we know is it’s difficult to work successfully with this person.

Here are some suggestions that might help reduce the level of difficulty you have when working with your difficult boss:

## 1. Look to Your Own Performance First

You might think your boss is being difficult because they are demanding a different level of output from you. Make sure you are clear on what they expect from you.

## 2. Realise You May Have Opposing Styles

You might be expecting something from your boss that they simply can't do. You might think they are unfriendly simply because they fail to say “Good morning.” To them, that might simply be a waste of time. Examine your own expectations of what you think they should be doing. They may not be very outgoing or simply operate differently than what you're used to. Reset your expectations.

## 3. Learn the Boss

Spend some time really observing your boss to see what it is they do that is impacting you. In the process, you might learn that they are getting leaned on by their boss and it's creating extra stress. You could discover they aren't a morning person, meaning you should delay important interactions until after lunch. Figure out their rhythms and modify your own.



## 4. Don't Shrink

All too often, when we don't like someone, we go out of our way to avoid them. While I think this tactic can work to keep you under the radar, wait to do that until you clearly have exhausted all your options. You may also find that more, not less, communication can help you with this type of person. Shrinking away into a dark corner won't help you.

## 5. Become Indispensable

If you've attempted to learn more about your boss, take it to the next level and become an indispensable employee. Focus on using your problem-solving skills and offer your boss additional help and support. This will help them shine to their own boss and reduce reasons for finding fault with you. You can become the “go-to” person that they respect and depend on.

## 6. Let It Roll Off of You

We will spend a lifetime running into people that are demanding, critical, and downright volatile. You need to learn the skill of blowing most of it off. Certainly, there will be some of it that will still bother you, but most of the time you can't let it affect you. I'm not suggesting ignoring your boss's needs or demands; I'm saying to not let their method of delivery be what grabs your attention or reaction. I have found that even the most difficult of bosses can be tamed or at least subdued.

If you're dealing with a difficult boss, be sure to follow these six tips. When you feel like quitting, just remember you can turn a bad situation around, but it does take work.

*Dorothy Tannahill-Moran, founder of New Chapter New Life, is a career coach, speaker and author & Jenna Arcand is the editor and SEO manager for Work It Daily's blog.*

