

HOW TO DEAL WITH THE BAD BOSS FROM HELL

by Gini Graham Scott, Ph.D.
Director, Changemakers

If you've read the book or seen the film *THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA*, you know that Miranda Priestly, the editor-in-chief of *Runway* magazine, is the boss from hell and she can run roughshod over her employees because she is offering a career-starting job with many perks in a glamorous industry. But while her portrayal of this nightmare boss may be a caricature, her dismissive attitude, complete lack of communication skills, and unrealistic expectations are all too common in today's workplace. In fact, most people will work for a difficult boss at some point in their career.

So what do you do if you are in such a situation, and you have a boss who unreasonably does things like Miranda such as: yells and screams at you, forces you to work extended overtime, insults and humiliates you personally or in front of others, repeatedly makes changes and blames you when things go wrong, and more. Well, there are techniques you can learn to make the job bearable, and even rewarding, when working for a bad boss. They work even if you are in a situation where you can't sit down with the boss to seek changes and don't want to leave because you desperately need the job or see it as the next step up the career ladder.

In such a case, your best option is to do the best you can in what seems like an impossible situation. If you can't change it and don't want to head out the door, change yourself or other things in your life, so you can better cope, even turn what might be misery into a source of inspiration, learning, and enjoyment. How? Here are some techniques you might use.

1. Use a relaxation technique to calm yourself down. For example, find a quiet place where you can take a few minutes to unwind, close your eyes, and mentally say to yourself over and over: "I'm calm. I'm relaxed," or "I feel fine. Nothing bothers me. I feel a calm sense of peace." Put the words you say to yourself in the present, telling you that you are feeling good now. If you can't be alone and are in the midst of a busy office, try tuning out everything around you. To do so, focus on some point in front of you and look ahead with unfocused eyes, while you mentally say the above words to yourself for a minute or so. And if you don't have a few minutes at one time to do this, try taking a series of breaks for 30 seconds or so to do this.

2. Use visualization and mental imagery techniques to think of better ways to carry out assigned tasks. You can do this in advance or on the job. Just see yourself in your mind's eye doing the job in a different, better way.

3. If you have a boss who is prone to require long days, plan ahead. Bring along bags of healthy snacks so you're ready for a day without a lunch break,

4. If other employees are in a similar situation, form a mutual support group that gets together off the job. Over lunch, dinner, or drinks, you can share your feelings of frustration, let

off steam, and unwind. In some situations, of course, such a group can use the power of numbers to go to a difficult boss or the boss's boss to press for changes. But in many situations you can't, such as if the boss owns the company or is considered such an important brilliant creative genius that the boss can do what he or she wants. So in such cases, a misery loves company group can help to make everyone feel better – in fact, you can even plan fun activities to let out your frustrations, such as a play golf with the boss's head game or a swap your bad boss stories contest, with a reward for the most difficult situation (though keep this in secret, of course!)

5. Look to family, friends, and significant others as a support group. Share your stories with them. Perhaps even turn your difficulties into a really good story that keeps others enthralled.

6. Keep your own private list of events, like an office score card for each crazy thing that your boss asks you to do. Give these incidents points from 1-10 based on how terrible, insane, or difficult they are. Then, monitor your score from day to day, and reward yourself with a treat after a particularly difficult day or week.

All these techniques won't cure your situation with a boss from hell, but they sure will make your experience a more enduring and even pleasant one.

You can also find more tips on what to do, as well as a quiz on "How Bad Is Your Boss?" on my Website for the book A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR WORKING WITH BAD BOSSES at www.badbosses.net.

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Gini Graham Scott, Ph.D. is the author of A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR WORKING WITH BAD BOSSES, published by AMACOM, and has a forthcoming book on A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR MANAGING EMPLOYEES FROM HELL coming out next year. The book features a collection of short stories from people with different types of bad bosses followed by a list of possible alternatives, a discussion of the best approach, and take-away tips for dealing with your own boss, being a better boss, or recognizing that you don't have a bad boss, but really are a bad employee! She has published over 40 books, and specializes in workplace relationships and professional and personal development. Her own Website is at www.ginigrahamscott.com.