



# Good Ways to Deal With Bad Bosses

YOUR FUTURE ADVANCEMENT DEPENDS ON YOUR ABILITY TO MANAGE THE CRAZIES ABOVE YOU. *by Daniel Bortz*

**THE TOP REASON** people quit their jobs, according to a recent Gallup poll? A bad immediate supervisor. Bully for those who can—and want to—find another position elsewhere, but if you otherwise like the job or need it as a stepping-stone, you'll have to learn to live with that subpar superior. The right coping strategy depends on what kind of lousy your leader is.

## THE MICROMANAGER

**Known for:** Hovering. Checking your work. Sometimes redoing it. **How to cope:** Work on building trust, which is the micromanager's Achilles' heel. Besides making sure your work is A+-worthy, put your boss on a schedule for when she can expect status reports, says Brad Karsh, president of professional training company JB Train-

ing Solutions. Start with daily updates, then ask for permission to shift to weekly: "If your in-box is crashing from all these memos, let me know. I'd be happy to start checking in on Fridays."

## THE PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE

**Known for:** Praising you in private then slamming your ideas in public. **How to cope:** "The onus is on you to learn what's going on inside his head," says Lynn Taylor, author of *Tame Your Terrible Office Tyrant*. To elicit honest feedback, appeal to the person's expertise, says Mitchell Kusy, an Antioch University professor who studies management styles. For example, "I got the sense you didn't like my idea. Would you mind next time sharing your constructive criticism in advance? It would really help me improve."

## THE PRAISE THIEF

**Known for:** Stealing credit for your work and ideas. **How to cope:** Take ownership by saying, "I noticed that the project I developed has taken off with the execs. I'd love to be included in those conversations." Still being left out? Start sending big-idea emails to your boss *and* your boss's boss, saying that you want to get input from both of them, suggests Karsh.

## THE HANDS-OFF HARRY

**Known for:** Being so laissez-faire it's a problem. "You might be working on the wrong things, only to find out later," says Kathleen Stinnett, founder of leadership consulting firm FutureLaunch. **How to cope:** When starting a project, ask your supervisor for specifics on what she's looking for, then send an email recapping the conversation. You'll be on the same page and have it on record in the event that there's a dispute later.

## THE NARCISSIST

**Known for:** Making you work late, calling you on vacation, and generally stealing your personal life. "His time will always be more valuable than yours," says Gary Namie, co-author of *The Bully at Work*. **How to cope:** Mind the ego. "Narcissists think they're perfect and hate criticism," says Jack Zenger, CEO of leadership consultancy Zenger Folkman. So cushion the request to reclaim your life with a compliment. "I admire your commitment to excellence and want to do the best job possible, but my work suffers when I'm fatigued. I need my weekends to recuperate." Says Namie: "You either challenge the boss or dig your own grave." **M**