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9 Things A Boss Should Never Say, Part 2: "My Boss Is A Jerk. What Can I Do?"

I am amazed, as are many of you, at how many insensitive and cruel bosses there are in the world. Following the stunning response from readers through the world who've read and responded to my recent article **9 Things A Boss Should Never Say To An Employee**, it appears there is a vast and sadly even growing population of unhappy employees who work for dictatorial bosses.

The complaints from workers about their supervisors seem endless. The common theme is that employees feel like second-class citizens, or in some cases, like slaves. Abused workers feel frustrated, angry and miserable. Many would quit their jobs if they could. They tell me they can't leave. They need a paycheck to cover their groceries, mortgage, utilities and car payment.

What can an employee do under these circumstances? As I see it, here are your available choices:

1. **Grin and Bare It.**

This is an acceptable option for most workers but it is certainly a sad one. It is destructive to the worker and supervisor. It's a zero sum game for everyone. There are winners (or perhaps in some cases, survivors). Employees will take body blows day after day and somehow survive. Are they engaged and highly productive workers? Generally, no. They do a minimum amount of work to get by. Do they ever stand up and confront the boss? Never. It would be neither practical nor effective. Do these workers treat others well? Only if necessary to maintain the status quo.

These are workers who don't rock the boat. They do, however, find ways to escape the frustration. They secretly gossip about management. They waste time wandering about the office or playing Internet games. In a discreet way,



Sadly, there is a large and even growing population of individuals currently working for bosses who are behaving like jerks.

they adroitly and spitefully sabotage their supervisor whenever they can get away with it. They leave work precisely at 5:00 p.m. They go home to complain bitterly to their spouse about lousy working conditions and the "jerk" that ruined their day. They never receive awards or promotions to highly prized positions. One day, if they haven't been fired, they retire with a small pension and wonder to themselves, "Why did I stay so long?"

I should note, to be fair, that there are noble employees who live in this negative environment but rise above it and conduct themselves with grace and distinction. They are admired by their peers for their selflessness. But for most, the endurance comes at a very high cost.

2. Find Another Job within the Company.

You could move to another department with another boss who treats workers well. There are a few courageous souls who want to stay within a company and simply seek responsibilities somewhere else in the operation. They will quietly visit with HR to learn about other options. There is risk, of course, for these migrants. What might happen if the boss finds out I'm looking? Will he or she speak well of me to another supervisor? Nevertheless they watch each week for new job postings and apply quickly with a hope they might be interviewed and hired.

As a side note, I find many employees currently looking to leave current jobs to go back to school to increase their knowledge base and thereby become more marketable. This often occurs when they learn a job they hoped to have landed requires more skills than they possess. To fix the problem, they take online courses or attend community college classes at night or on the weekend. No matter what, they are driven to leave the "jerk" behind and improve their future circumstances.

3. Talk to Your Boss.

Invite your unkind boss to discuss your feelings. Seek to understand his or her issues as well. Find common ground to develop mutual job satisfaction for both parties. This option is definitely worth a try. Of course there is some risk. If a discussion doesn't go well, there may be serious consequences later. But if the boss has any heart at all, there may be a very good chance of interpersonal improvement. This option requires significant courage and self-confidence. It's not for the faint of heart.

I have actually seen a situation where the plaintiff and the defendant enjoyed a significant improvement in their relationship when the employee asked her boss if they could begin their conversation with a prayer. When I heard of this exchange, I was very doubtful of the outcome. But to my surprise and delight, hearts were somehow softened and the two parties ceased to be adversaries.

4. Quit and Find a New Job.

Tender your resignation and find a new job where employees are respected or launch your own business where you are the boss. For me, I will always favor this solution. If the other options aren't attractive, this choice is noble and very worthwhile. If there's a new employer on your mind, out of necessity or not, take the effort to find out how the new boss and organization treats its employees in advance. Every company has a culture; how people are treated. You will want to find one that fits your personality. Take time to visit

with current employees and ask them their opinion on issues that matter most to you. Avoid any company that is a personal mismatch. Doing your research is key. As to a manager, find out what subordinates think of their boss. Don't make the same mistake twice and make your hard-earned move only to end up working for another "jerk."

5. **Become an Entrepreneur**

Finally, as an entrepreneur myself, I happily suggest the option of launching a new business. This option should not be overlooked. I'm sure you have had ideas for new products or services. You also know about customers and their needs. This may be an excellent time to connect with potential customers who will buy your solutions. You might find there is a high interest and a large market for your wares. If so, I say go for it! It may be the best decision you've ever made. If you're thinking of taking the leap, I wrote about the decision process fairly extensively in my most widely-read Forbes article to date: ***[Kiss Your Boss Goodbye. It's Time To Be An Entrepreneur.](#)*** If you decide to take the plunge, I'm here for you. **Grow America**, the company I have started to provide no-cost help and resources to teach and support new entrepreneurs, is ready to support your journey of a lifetime.

Do you have other recommendations? Stories about successful transitions you've made? I'd love to hear what's on your mind, either here or via [@AskAlanEHall](https://twitter.com/AskAlanEHall) or www.AlanEHall.com.

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