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Two minutes notice

Is your boss toxic?

by Mariah Parker, July 27, 2024

The 8 Types of Toxic Bosses - And How to Handle Each One

A great boss can make every aspect of your work life better, while a toxic one can become a waking nightmare. The first step to surviving a toxic boss is knowing who you're dealing with, and how to work with them.

Let's meet the eight types of toxic bosses:

The Hustler

They're in the office before you wake up, and you're pretty sure they never leave. They are disappointed to discover you have a life outside the office.

How To Handle Them: Get the Hustler off your back with proactive updates. Show them that you can prioritize tasks and set clear expectations on how long the work will take to complete.

The Spirit

When you need them most (and least), they are nowhere to be found.

How To Handle Them: Update them regularly on your progress in writing. If they don't respond, seek support from another manager or senior teammate.

In case of trouble, make sure there is a record that you were doing your work and asking for their advice—and they weren't responding.

The Best Friend

What professional boundaries? The Best Friend just wants everyone to like them.

How To Handle Them: Keep a professional but friendly distance and be careful with what you share. The Best Friend can turn into The Worst Frenemy when things get too personal.

The Hog

They take all the credit and share all the blame.

How To Handle Them: Work with your colleagues. Recognize their contributions and ask them to recognize yours.

If your colleagues can't or won't help, keep a record of your contributions, and politely but firmly share them.

The Micromanager

What's that breeze? It's The Micromanager, breathing down your neck.

How To Handle Them: Keep them in the loop with regular updates. If they ask for more frequent updates, gently remind them of your competence and let them know when you'll be able to provide an update.

The Firestarter

Everything is urgent, all the time. There is no time for long-term planning or strategy when you're fighting fires.

How To Handle Them: Prioritize your work based on its actual urgency and impact and communicate your plans to your manager. If you can, speak up for long-term solutions to break the firefighting cycle.

The Wall

Whether you're trying to make personal or professional progress, The Wall is standing in your way.

How to Handle Them: Ask questions to understand their reasons for blocking a project and come up with solutions that work for both of you.

You can also build partnerships with allies in your company to get around The Wall's obstacles.

The Monster

The Monster is your worst childhood bully in your adult life. All their reports are terrified of them.

How To Handle Them:

Document everything. Write down evidence of both how they are treating you, and how you are performing at work.

Most importantly, put yourself first. Approach HR, seek support outside your workplace, or even leave if your safety is at risk.