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Five Ways to Avoid Turning Into Your Bad Boss

Los Angeles, Calif.—A bad boss' nasty habits can rub off on you. If you find yourself starting to behave like your bad boss, here are five reminders to keep yourself on track toward a more positive, productive career, says [Dr. Noelle Nelson](#), author of [Got a Bad Boss? Work that Boss to Get What You Want at Work](#) (Amazon eBook, \$7.99).

If you have a disagreement with someone, take it up in private, never in public.

"A bad boss sees no problem yelling at an employee in front of everyone," says Nelson. "He may think he's showing off his authority but in fact he's just showing everyone that he's an incompetent manager. It's inevitable that there will be conflict in the workplace. Always remember that conflict resolution isn't a spectator sport. It's something you make private."

Ask for help when you need it, and offer help when others need it.

"A bad boss will never ask for help or help others," explains Nelson. "He's too insecure. He doesn't want to appear that he doesn't have all the answers or if he helps someone to succeed, that person will get the credit not him."

Nelson suggests that you do your best on your own, but when you need help, don't hesitate to ask—and be sure to thank the person who helps you; a little appreciation goes a long way. "Be sure to help others when they ask. Help them willingly and graciously," says Nelson. "Never make someone feel indebted to you because of your help. Help with no strings attached and you'll earn the respect of others—something you'll need on your way up."

Take criticism as an opportunity to learn how to do your job better.

"A bad boss is an insecure boss, so imagine how he would take criticism. Not well," says Nelson. "The best thing you can do when someone says you could do better is listen up, and glean as much useful information as you can from the criticism. There will be times, no matter how well you think you're doing, that you'll be told that you're not. Ignore your hurt feelings and listen. Then put your entire focus on learning how you can do better next time."

Leave your personal problems where they belong—at home.

"A bad boss will often inject his personal life into the workplace—providing way too many details and expecting all to commiserate with him if the news is bad. The workplace isn't group therapy," explains Nelson. "We all have problems in our lives outside of work, but leave those problems at home. There's little your coworkers can do to alleviate your problems other than sympathize, and often your problems will distract your coworkers from doing their job properly. Not to mention how much you'll be distracted from doing your job, because your focus is not where it should be."

Don't gossip.

"A bad boss wouldn't think twice about spreading rumors and gossip if it's advantageous to him," says Nelson. "That's because he doesn't care about his workers. How does it feel when someone gossips about you? Devastating. Gossiping is a waste of your time and energy. It certainly is a waste of company time, and it does nothing to accomplish your goals." Nelson says gossiping also includes speaking poorly about someone electronically. "Assume every email you write on your work computer, every tweet, every Facebook entry that refers to a co-worker, will be read by someone you'd rather not see it," she says. "Be as courteous in cyberspace as you are in person."

For tips on working with specific bad boss types, go to <http://www.noellenelson.com>, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GotABadBoss or at <https://twitter.com/GotABadBoss>.

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