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What To Do When Your Boss Plays Favorites

Los Angeles, Calif. — You work hard, play by the rules, and expect to be rewarded accordingly, but when you have a boss who plays favorites (and you are on the outside), work can be a frustrating ordeal. There are ways to get beyond the favoritism shown by your bad boss and still find career success, says [Dr. Noelle Nelson](#), author of [*Got a Bad Boss? Work that Boss to Get What You Want at Work*](#).

“A favoritism boss is one of the most insecure types of bosses around,” says Nelson. “Their secret fear is that they are not good enough—for their job, as a person, as a boss. That means their biggest desire is to be admired by everyone, everywhere, all of the time. Since that’s never going to happen, favoritism bosses settle for those chosen few who are willing to fawn over them.”

Nelson says that employees who find themselves outside of their bosses’ inner circle can give the boss the ego strokes they desire without selling out. “Make him or her feel important,” says Nelson. “You can genuinely do this by first dropping the ‘poor me’ grumblings to other employees who are also outsiders. Instead, set up a quick meeting with your boss to ask if your work is meeting his expectations. Ask for suggestions for improvement. Write everything down. You’ll be stroking your favoritism boss’s needy ego in a non-brown-nosing way. When done, thank your boss. Showing appreciation is another way of communicating that you value his opinion—just what a favoritism boss needs.”

Nelson says to then check in with the boss regularly, reporting on how you took his suggestions to heart and always being grateful for input. “Let your boss know he is making a difference in your work. In a sense, you’re turning your boss into a mentor,” says Nelson. “By elevating your boss to this level, you are not only making him feel good about himself, you are making yourself increasingly important in his eyes. That’s a much better road to career advancement than grouching and gossiping about him and his favorites around the water cooler.”

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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