

How to deal with a new boss (that you hate)



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Even in the most harmonious workplace, people don't get along. And chances are, there's someone at your place of work who grinds your gears and rubs you the wrong way. So, what happens if that dreaded colleague somehow winds up your boss? Having to report to your office enemy is a nightmare scenario. But it's not hopeless. Here's how to deal with a new boss that you hate.

1. Pinpoint the problem

What is it exactly about your new boss you don't like? Does he or she have a dour demeanour, an acid tongue, or a reputation for coasting? Dig deep and decipher exactly what the issue is so you can decide whether it's possible to resolve. "Everyone brings their baggage to work, and what

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“Usually, the boss is a trigger for something else. If we’re reacting really strongly in the moment to something, it’s usually because this has happened to us several times in our lives and it’s really frustrating for us. It doesn’t mean the boss isn’t a jerk, but usually it’s a real core struggle.”

2. **Develop empathy for the enemy**

No matter how much you loathe your soon-to-be-supervisor, it’s smart to put yourself in their shoes. This person is about to take on a weighty new responsibility, and by considering how they’re feeling you might find your stance softening. “You have to get over yourself and imagine what it would be like for this person taking on the new role,” said Janet Froom, leadership and team coach and founder of [Horizon Leadership](#).

“Think, ‘I may not like this person, but I know what it’s like to feel the thrill of a new job, but I also know it can be uncertain. If I can understand you, I might be able to relate to you differently.”

3. **Seek other opinions**

Talking helps. Try a career coach, your HR department, or even your friends. Experts don’t recommend seething internally in silence. “This is not something to be done alone,” Rider said. “This is something to be curious about. It’s not a finger-pointing thing.”

4. **Shape your working relationship together**

You don’t necessarily have to acknowledge the elephant in the room to move forward with your boss. Consider having a general conversation about your boss’s expectations and

opportunity to connect and come together to solve a problem.”

5. **Clear the air**

If the acrimony’s obvious, you have nothing to lose by candidly coming clean. Try to have a direct conversation with your new boss and be specific about identifying the behaviours that have bothered you in the past.

“Say, ‘hey, when you called me out in that meeting, I felt like we weren’t on the same team, and it was in front of other stakeholders. It made me feel really crappy. I wondered what you meant when you did that,’” Rider said. “That’s a level of sophistication I really respect, but it takes work to get there.”

6. **Ask for a transfer**

If the other approaches don’t work, get out of there. Maybe an internal transfer could put you under the leadership of a more sympathetic manager without forcing you to make major life changes. And you don’t necessarily need to make it clear that the motivating factor behind the move is your brutal boss.

“If you think it’s not going anywhere and you’re not going to be happy, and you don’t think that person’s ever going to change, then you need to figure out a strategy to get out of that department,” said Cissy Pau, principal consultant at [Clear HR Consulting](#).

“Sometimes people are unhappy and then they get bitter and resentful. They think the company should do something for them, but ultimately I think they should take action.”



can poison other elements of your life and significantly increase your overall stress. You don't need to sprint out the door immediately, but it's probably a wise idea to begin sharpening your resume.

"If the relationship is already really bad, people generally leave," said Gilles Rochefort, president of [PMC Coaching](#). "For your own sanity, it might be the best thing."

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