

OVERCOMING AN *imperfect* BOSS

A Practical Guide to Building a Better Relationship with Your Boss

The Visual Version

Larry Coppenrath



KARIN HURT



Adapted: Karin Hurt - Jun 14
"Overcoming An Imperfect BOSS"



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1 Great Expectations

2 The Biggest Mistake

3 Tough Scenes

- Scene 1 "How do I get my boss to trust me?"
- Scene 2 "How do I persuade my boss?"
- Scene 3 "How do I give my boss bad news?"
- Scene 4 "What if my boss is disengaged?"
- Scene 5 "What if my boss is moody?"
- Scene 6 "What if I am asked to represent my boss?"
- Scene 7 "Why doesn't my boss see my potential?"
- Scene 8 "I don't know where I stand."
- Scene 9 "My boss is fine, but his boss scares me out of my socks."
- Scene 10 "My boss likes me, but my peers think I'm a kiss up."

4 When A Good Boss Relationship Goes Too Far

5 What If He's Really A Jerk

6 Be The Boss You Wish You Had: An Exercise

7 Holding A Real Conversation

Afterword: A Challenge



Great Expectations

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Consider Your Expectation Of A Boss

- What were his or her greatest strengths? +
- What drove you crazy? +
- What did you learn in working with his or her imperfections? +
- How did you emerge stronger as a result? +

Nearly Impossible Expectations

- Engage us in a compelling vision
- Have the utmost integrity
- Be authentic and transparent
- Treat us kindly and fairly
- Develop, mentor, and coach us
- Empower and trust us
- Communicate clearly
- Motivate us
- Be competent and knowledgeable
- Have a sense of humor

Why It's Hard

- Boss-Subordinate is Unnatural By Design
- We Sell Our Power For Money

We Look To A Person

- We have not chosen for
- We Might / Might Not Respect

- Affirmation
- Evaluation
- Reward

To help us "Succeed"

- We must figure out what makes him/her like us
- Then adjust accordingly

We also take all criticism to heart

With an awkward Performance Feedback System to help us grow.



The Biggest Mistake

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Career

You Own

- Your Support Structure
- Your Motivation
- Your Development
- Your Career Path

Good Leaders Help

- Mentor / Coach
- Craft Experiences
- Provide Performance Feedback

Leaders Are Limited

- They Are Human
- They Will Never Have All You Need
- Focus On Ways You Can Provide Support
- It's A "Work" Relationship, Make It Mutually Beneficial
- Ask "How Can I Best Support You ?"

The Leader's World

- Your Success Is Their Success
- Have Pressures You Don't Have Visibility Into
- Might Be Overwhelmed At Times
- Has A Boss To Please As Well
- Also Has Work / Life Balance Issues
- Your Growth Provides Additional Strength


Tips

- Be Predictable, Small Stuff Matters
- Regardless Of Communication Type; Summarize First Then Provide Detail
- Uncover Problems & Recommend Solutions
- Provide Feedback (Positive & Negative) In Private
- Document Your Accomplishments

Remember You Are Two Messy Human Beings Doing The Best You Can. Work on Making It As Mutually Satisfying As Possible.



'How Do I Get My
Boss To Trust Me?'

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Do What You Say You Will Do

Follow Through

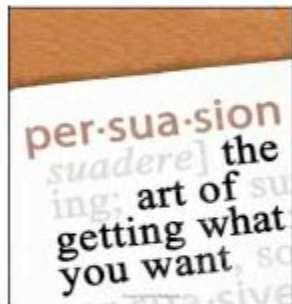
Develop Great Peer Relationships

Follow The 'No Blind Side' Rule

Know The Details

Ask 'What Else Can I Do To Help?'

Trust Is Earned Not Bestowed



'How Do I
Persuade My Boss?'

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Don't Jump In .. Be Prepared

Do It In Private

Minimize The Emotion;
Maximize The Potential

Research The Issue & Risks

Share Your Concerns Frankly

Understand Your Boss' Perspective
& Hear Him Out

Acknowledge His Point Of View
It Likely Comes With A Much
Broader Organizational Outlook

Ensure Your Proposal Has A Relevant
Data Story To Back It Up

Be Prepared To Answer The Question
'What Does Your Team Think ? Are There
Alternatives To Consider ?

D. A. R. N. Method



How Do I Give My Boss Bad News ?

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Disclosure

Explain The Situation & Root Cause

"I've had a bad day. We have a bit of a situation, and I need to fill you in. ____ happened ... and now we have _____. When I dug in deeper I learned it was caused by ____ (behavior or situation not person)"

Accountability

Don't Blame Anyone Else

" I accept full responsibility, I should have been closer to this. Here's how I can prevent a similar outcome next time ____."

Response

Share Your Solution

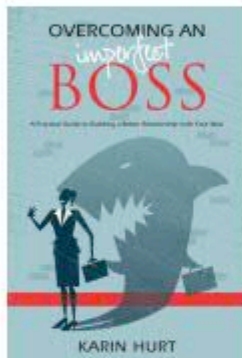
" Here is what I've already done ____." (It's important to have something to say here.)

Next Steps


Share Your Plan & What You Need

" Here's what I'm going to do next ____.
I could use your help with ____." (if needed)"

There Is An Upside To This Issue



What If My Boss Is Disengaged ?

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Freedom To Experiment

- Don't Go Crazy
- Try Creative Approaches
- Pilot That New Idea
- Lead Differently
- Package Lessons Learned

Broadened Network

- Seek Out Mentors/Advocates
- Look For Opportunities To Interact With Additional Layers Of Management
- Invest In Peer Relationships

Marketing Your Work

- Streamline Communication
- Improve Presentation Skills
- Share Information & Get Feedback
- Reach Out To Other Stakeholders

Strategic Thinking

- Disengagement Forces You To Work A Level Up
- Think About What You Would And Should Say In This Situation
- Learn As Much As You Can In The Bigger Context

Team Building

- Focus On The Outcome
- Leverage Individual and Team Strengths
- Eliminate Single Points Of Failure



What If My Boss Is Moody ?

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Find A Safe Way To Talk About It

- Find A Calm Time
- Use Humor (if appropriate)

Notice The Patterns

- We Are All Creatures Of Habit
- Chart Outbursts
- Learn Triggers & Timing
- Keep This Information Private

Understand Root Cause

- All Of Us Are Impacted By Similar Causes
 - Tired
 - Stress
 - Hormonal
- Reduce By Identifying & Addressing The Cause

Don't Reward The Behavior

- Don't Coddle
- Don't Walk Away
- Stay Calm; Suggest Another Time

Keep Cool

- Bad Moods Are Contagious
- Immunize Yourself As Much As Possible
- Don't Take It Personally
- Make Sure You Understand Your Part In This Mix Master



What If I Am Asked To Represent My Boss ?

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Understand The Norms

- "Seek First To Understand, Then To Be Understood" -Stephen Covey
- Don't Be A Distraction
- Formal or Informal There Is A Protocol

Do Your Homework

- Knowledge Inspires Confidence (In You, From Them)
- Get Up To Speed On Familiar Topics
- Learn What You Must Do To Lead Effectively In This Context

Stakeholder Your Big Ideas

- If It Is Just Sitting In A Meeting; Talk With The Boss About Addressing New Ideas
- Work Your Ideas Off Line With Key Opinion Leaders
- Ask For Help Fine Tuning Your Ideas and Presentation
- Your Ideas Will "Sell" Better With A Few Key Supporters

Speak Up

- Don't Waste Your Seat At The Table
- Take Good Notes & Report Back
- Utilize Your Insights, Share Your Truth
- Resist The Urge To Nod In Agreement

Build Deeper Relationships

- Build Deep Connections
- Build Relationships With Your Temporary Peers
- Let Them Know Who You Are & What You Value
- Be Extraordinarily Helpful

This Will Not Go Unnoticed



Why Doesn't My Boss See My Potential ?

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Understand His Perspective

- Truly Understand His View
- How Is Your Current Performance A Factor
- What Are You Doing Well In His Eyes ?
- What Is Not Going So Well ?
- Resist Discussing Promises Made By Other Leaders

Be Real

- Be Open & Honest About Your Feeling & Why
- Share Examples If Appropriate

Shadowing

- Ask If You Can Hang Out With Him For A Day Or Two
- Emphasis On Learning "The Real Deal"
- Focus On Learning What The Next Level Is Really All About

Skip Level Meeting

- Ask If It Is OK To Have A Meeting With His Boss
- Ask For Feedback On Perceptions
- What Can You Do To More Readily Support Company Objectives

Stories


- Share Your Career Story
- Be Open About Disappointments
- Help Him Appreciate The Long View Of Your Growth

Development Plans

- Listen To Feedback Carefully
- Suggest A Few Options To Support Your Growth
- Ask For Other Developmental Ideas To Consider
- Assign Time Frames For These Ideas
- Provide Follow-up Upon Completion



**I Don't Know
Where I Stand**

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Questions You Should Ask Your Boss

- What specifically can I do to better support our team's mission ?
- What do your peers say about you ?
- If your boss were to give me one piece of advice, what would it be ?
- Who should I be working with more closely ?
- What could I be doing to make your job easier ?
- To what do you attribute your own career success ? How can I be more effective in that area ?
- Which parts of my style concern you the most ?
- Specifically, what do I need to work on to be ready for _____ (insert assignment you are most interested in)

Questions Your Boss Might Ask You

- What are the things that excite & energize you about your work here ?
- What are the things that drain or frustrate you about your work here ?
- What have you done to reduce this frustration ?
- If you were a superhero, what powers would you have ? How would your powers help our company ?
- How is your work/family balance ? If not satisfied, what are you doing to change it for the better
- How many people on your network list would leave their position (or company) to join your leadership in a new department or company ?
- What is your "sound" ? How are you perceived by others; eg. a Harley Davidson has a unique sound that differentiates itself from other motorcycles. What is your business ? How would others describe you ? Would they know this the first time you met ?
- What are some of your outside interests ? What are the skills you are leveraging in these outside interests ?
- What is your marketing or sales approach ?
- We are at your retirement celebration. What position do you hold that you are retiring from at this time?



My Boss Is Fine, But His Boss Scares Me Out Of My Socks

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Overconfidence

- Leave The Rose Colored Glasses At Home
- Results Are Always Balanced By Concerns
- Acknowledge Risks - Executives Like To Fret !

Lack Of Confidence

- If They Go To Bed Worrying If You Are the Guy For The Job. You Probably Won't Like What Happens When They Wake Up !
- Show Up Strong & Knowledgeable
- Listen To Questions Carefully & Share Expertise

Over-Disclosure

- Tell The Truth Elegantly, Then Shut Up
- Don't Take Them Into The Minutia
- Stick To What is Relevant and Move On

Forgetting To Breathe

- The Tendency To Talk & Talk undermines Your Credibility
- It is not good to hear "Dude, Take A Breath"
- Pause For Questions, Make Conversation

Ignoring The Ask

- Ask For What You Need, Help Them Help You.

The Secret: "Credibility"

- Every Interaction Is An Opportunity To Build Trust & Connections
- Trusted Advisors Have Successful Track Records of Decisions/Projects.
- Layer Simple Confidence With Carefully Crafted Words & Project / Relationship Will Prosper.



My Boss Likes Me, But My Peers Think I'm A Kiss Up

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Never Ask For Help

- Your Not Cocky, Just Busy
- Failing To Reach Out Got You Labelled "Arrogant"
- Peers Don't Bother You Because You Look "Too Busy"
- Ask For Help Every Now & Again
- Express Gratitude Publicly

Challenge Them In Front Of The Boss

- Don't Do That
- If You Have Feedback For Your Peers Do It Off-line
- Provide Your Input Early, Then Just Nod In Support Of The Enhanced Plan

Withhold Best Practices

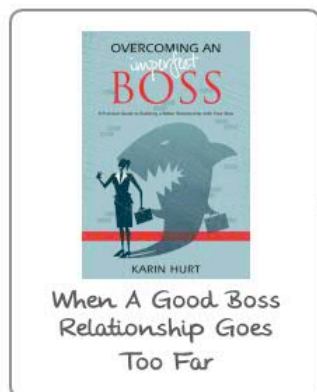
- Let People (Peers) Know What You Are Up To
- If Half-Baked, Provide An Overview & Promise Updates
- Peers Trust Peers Who Share What They Are Doing

Take The Credit

- Don't Get Caught Up In The Moment; You Didn't Do It Alone
- Praise Deflected To The Team Provides Their 15 Seconds In The Sun
- Confident Humility Builds Trust & Effective Teams

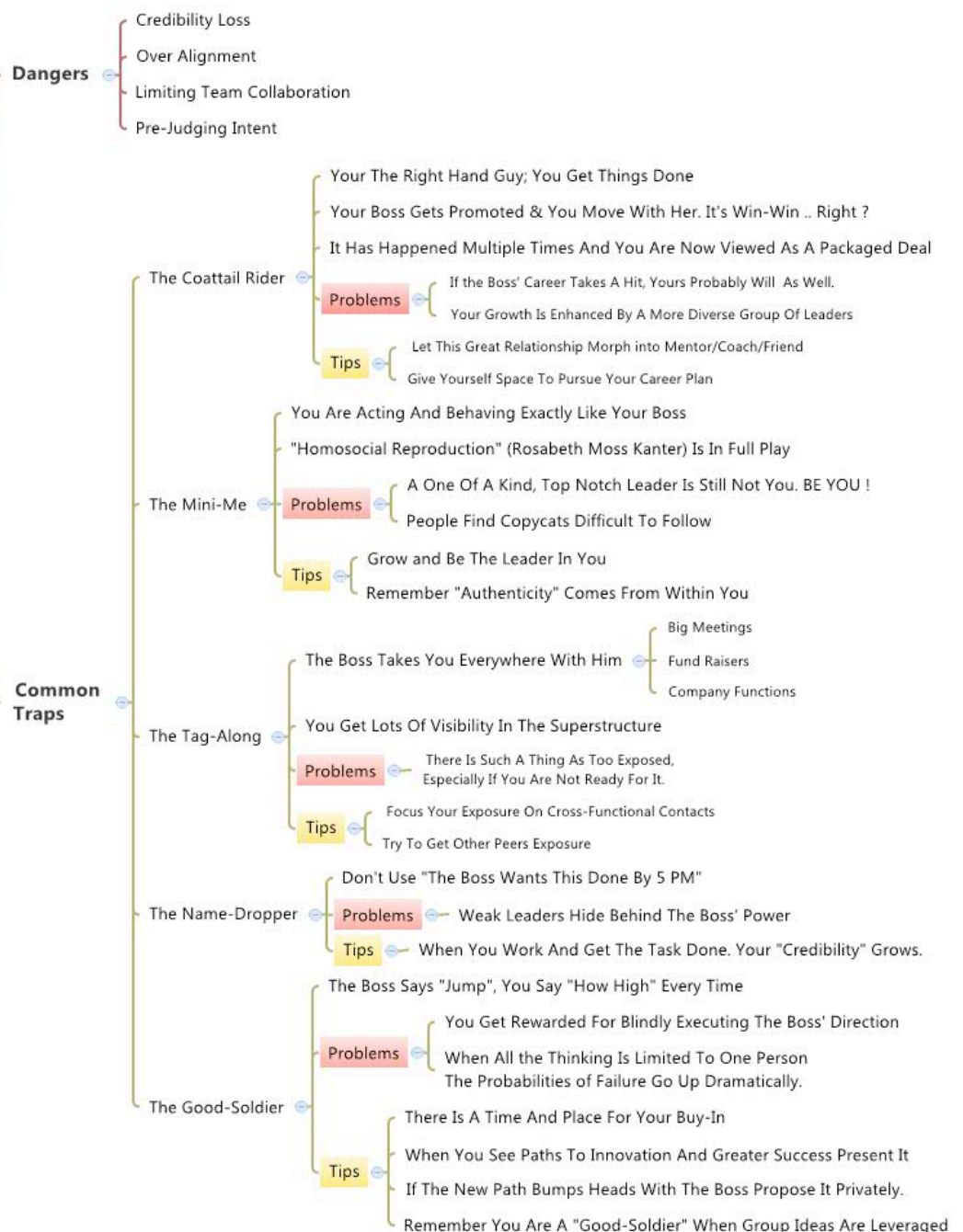
React Poorly To Feedback

- Sure Way To Lose Friends & Alienate Peers
- You Stop Listening - They Stop Talking (At Least To Your Face)
- Always Thank The Person Providing Feedback
- What You Do With Feedback Is Up To You



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JERK

What If He's Really A Jerk ?

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Is It The Truth

- Find Out More About Them
- Is He or She Really The Problem ... Really Look Around
- Could It Be You or Your Impact On The Team ?
- Provide Honest Feedback - In Private
- They Could Be Starving For Help
- Demonstrate The Behavior Your Colleagues Seek

Don't You Become A Jerk

- Don't Sit Around Commiserating About The Jerk
- Focus On The Work
- IF You Need Guidance
 - HR
 - Mentor
 - Trusted Professional

Caution

- Jerky Behavior Is Contagious
- Pay Attention To How The Stress Is Impacting You
- Don't Give Up ! You'll Waste All Your Hard Work Because Of One Person

Maybe I Should Just Quit


- People Don't Quit Jobs; The Quit People
- Provide Honest Feedback - In Private
- They Could Be Starving For Help
- Demonstrate The Behavior Your Colleagues Seek
- Before Quitting
 - Go Slow
 - Keep Doing Your Job
 - Think About What You Love To Do
 - Arrange Informal Interviews
- When Ready, Talk With Your Boss
 - Share Feelings
 - Explore Options

Tips

- Remember A Jerky Boss Is A Transient Person In Your Life
- Ground Yourself
 - Exercise
 - Meditation
 - Prayer
- Stay True To Your Leadership Philosophy
- Leverage The Experience To Fortify Your Own Leadership Style
 - Keep A Journal
 - Document What It Was Like In That Environment
 - Pledge "Never To Be That Guy"



Be The Boss You Wish You Had: An Exercise

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Consider Your Ideal Boss



- Name
- Value
- Do
- Think
- Say

Describe Your Leadership



- Name
- Value
- Do
- Think
- Say

Compare The Grids



- Negative Forces
 - Item
 - Item
 - Item
- Positive Forces
 - Item
 - Item
 - Item

What Is Helping / Hurting Your Leadership Success

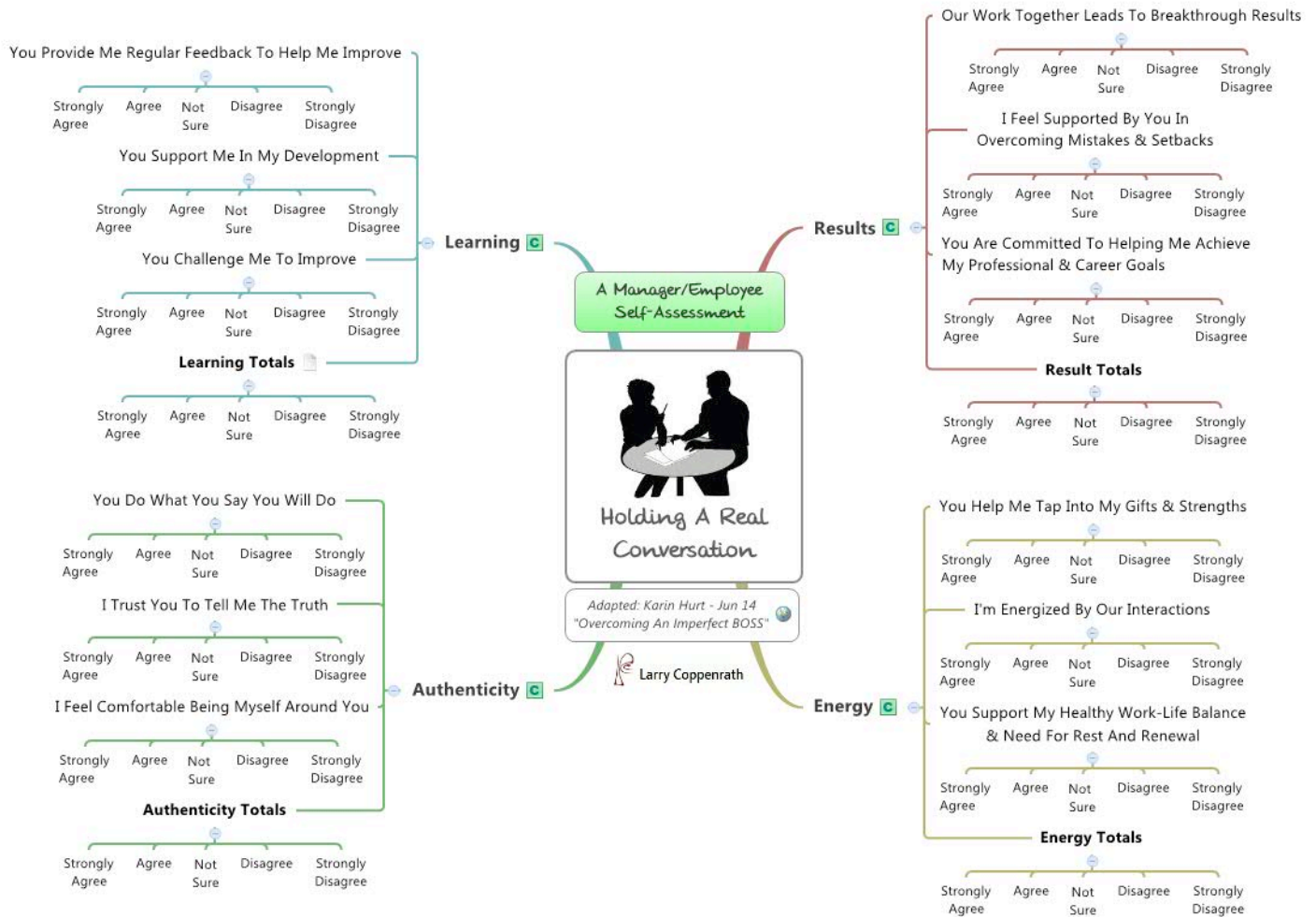


- Like
- Unlike

Identify Specific Actions

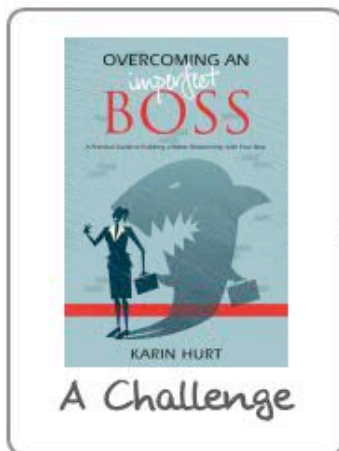



- First
 - Action
 - By When
 - Who To Involve
 - Who Can Help
- Second
 - Action
 - By When
 - Who To Involve
 - Who Can Help
- Third
 - Action
 - By When
 - Who To Involve
 - Who Can Help



Leadership is never handled ... not for your boss, or for you. Consider your relationship with your boss a Learning Laboratory.

Leverage every interaction with your boss to improve your own leadership. Be the boss you wish you had.



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If you lead other leaders now, open up this conversation with your team. Have them identify their ideal boss, and learn what you could do better. Use these vital, messy human relationships to work on your leadership while you work on the work.

Grow leaders who'll become the boss you'd want. Be the boss they need you to become.