



Learn to Engage (or Get Around) a Disengaged Supervisor

by ROBERT MONTENEGRO

When we think of lousy bosses, our minds typically veer toward **sadists**, **tyrants**, and soulless **micro-managers**. It's similar to how when we think of car accidents, our thoughts are filled with pile-ups and explosions rather than fender benders. The point here, as *The Seattle Times* writer **Lisa Quast** astutely notes in an article posted this morning, is that most bad bosses aren't bad people. In fact, a lot of them are actually quite friendly. The problem is that no amount of friendliness can make up for poor leadership skills or an overall state of disengagement. And as much as we hate to admit it, most of us need a supervisor to lean on, bounce ideas off of, seek guidance from, and represent our interests to those higher up the totem pole. A good boss is a walking, talking source of professional development. A bad boss is a dead end.

Quast's article places a keen focus on how to manage a supervisor who doesn't appear to have much in the way of motivation. She lists several strategies for personal success both in your work and in your career development. These include seeking out mentors elsewhere in your company, insisting on receiving performance evaluations, and holding a private, polite airing of grievances:

"If you're not comfortable with your manager's level of engagement in your work, have a private conversation with your boss and share your concerns — but do so in a calm and compassionate manner. Brainstorm ways you can work together that will satisfy your need for management direction."

Take a look at her piece and think about if any of her advice applies to your current work situation. If your boss isn't scratching your back when you scratch theirs (I should stress — figuratively), try to apply some of Quast's tips to see if you can extract a modicum of professional value from the relationship.

Read more at [The Seattle Times](#).

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