

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



932 Working With a Bad Boss – Part 1

Have you ever had a boss you would label as “bad”? I have. In my working life, I have had over 30 people I reported to in one way or another, and several of them were simply a disappointment. I’m Jerry Roberts, and we’ll talk about bad bosses, next on The Extra Point.

The topic today is working with a bad boss. Before we go further, you can find more on this topic with Extra Point #209, from December 2018, entitled, “If You Work for a Flawed Boss.”

What is a bad boss? The answer to that question is not as clear-cut or universal as we want to believe. Every person has different needs and desires, employers have different corporate cultures and expectations, and managers are tasked to blend all that together so everybody is happy. Trust me, it’s not easy.

Management training once was a requirement before you were allowed to lead a team. Today, in this community, it is the exception rather than the rule.

Year after year, I encounter managers who have never received any formal training, and they’ve been in their positions for 10 years, 20 years, sometimes longer.

Admittedly, some people don’t have the character or personality to lead a team. Others, most others I think, simply haven’t been trained for the job.

Without training, most managers are heavily influenced by their boss, who may also have never been trained. For better or worse, the new manager will pick up traits from their boss, both positive and negative.

What are some general qualities that are found in most bosses who are categorized as “bad”? Poor communication skills, micromanaging, the

inability to motivate workers, refusal to collaborate, lack of accountability, a troublesome attitude, including launching off on power trips, and this list could go on for a while.

I’ve had managers who were lazy, or who lied, or asked me to lie to clients, or cheated, or tried to cheat me out of my earnings. Some talked behind my back, and friends told me. One took my work and passed it off as his own. When it comes to the topic of bad bosses, I’ve had my share.

Even with all that, I came away richer for the experiences. Maybe you’re saying, “Wait a minute Jerry, you listed a lot of bad stuff there, and you figure you came away richer?” Yes, and I’ll explain.

- The lazy boss taught me to be self-reliant, because I wasn’t going to get help from him.
- The boss who screamed at me showed me how to reason with difficult people.
- The boss who broke promises taught me to cope with stress and disappointment.
- The boss who fired me for not lying to a client reaffirmed that losing a job is better than losing yourself.
- And all together, my problem managers also helped me decide what kind of boss I wanted be if I ever got that opportunity.

Once I became a manager, I saw how someone in a leadership position could be overwhelmed by their job, and by the expectations of others.

Workers didn’t understand my problems, and I didn’t blame them. They were focused on their own issues, and rightly so.

I pushed people to perform at a higher level, and some did. I cleaned up behind others who didn’t. I worked 60- and 70-hour weeks, and it led to health problems.

(Con’t.)

I took care of people, let them do their job without me over their shoulder, and freely gave praise. Still, it's possible some people viewed me as a bad boss.

Even if not, I certainly could have been better.

Tomorrow, thoughts on how to deal with a bad boss, if you think you've got one.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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