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8 Ways to Overcome Friction Between You and Your Boss

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Welcome to *Recruiter Q&A*, where we pose employment-related questions to the experts and share their answers! Have a question you'd like to ask? Leave it in the comments, and you might just see it in the next installment of *Recruiter Q&A*!

Today's Question: They say people don't quit their jobs — they quit their bosses. But is that the only solution when there's friction between you and your boss? What can employees do to make the **workplace** more pleasant when they don't get along with their bosses?



1. Communicate

The boss is the boss. You took the job and said you'd do what the boss required, right? Okay then. Communicate with your boss. Ask how you can do a better job, how you can be the best that you can be. Do not argue — *listen!* Then do what your boss wants you to do. They say "the peasants vote with their feet," you can, too, at any time. Give the boss a chance first.

— *Susannah Surgeoner, **The Busted Boomer***



2. Kill 'em With Kindness

Twice during my 32-year career, I have had bosses with whom I did not get along. The second wasn't easy. I didn't like him. He made it plain he didn't like me. I came in early to get certain things done that would have otherwise required him and I to be in the same space at the same time. When it was necessary for us to converse or share space, I killed him with kindness. It soothed my stress level. I also kept notes on issues where he made it overly difficult for me to accomplish certain jobs — this was to ensure that my annual efficiency rating would not be negatively impacted.

— Anna Renault, **Author and Radio Host** 



3. Reframe Your Expectations

Don't make it personal. Reframe your expectations of what the relationship is supposed to offer. You don't have to be friends, just functional colleagues.

— Todd Horton, [KangoGift](#) 



4. Find Some Common Ground

You don't like your boss — and the world hasn't ended. In fact, this isn't the last person you won't like — or the last boss you won't like. Get over yourself, and understand that this isn't the worst thing in the world.

Say it: "We don't see eye to eye on this one — but I understand where you're coming from." It's disarming, honest, and a great bridge between you and anyone you don't like, but have to work with.

Focus on what you *do* have in common. Even if it's just shoes. You may hate your boss's politics, morality, snarky manner, or something else. But you may have something in common, like a sense of competition, wanting to do well for the company, or even your dogs. Find the commonalities, and play to your relationship strengths.

— April Masini, [Ask April](#) 



5. Look Within

Having “bosses” is a natural consequence of the workforce, but one that sets up a degree of confrontation. There are plenty of bad managers out there, but there are also plenty of managers just trying their best to help the company. I would suggest asking yourself what you would do in their position. If you can view the “friction” as a reaction to trying to do what’s best for the company, then you should approach the issues as problems that you can solve together. If your manager’s actions are malicious and personal, however, then it’s time to talk to their boss or move on.

— Miles Jennings, [Recruiter.com](#) 



6. Become Indispensable

Quite simply, the easiest way to gain the respect of a tough boss is to find a business need the boss has and fill that need. If the boss is complaining about bad

fill that gap. If the boss is complaining about bad metrics, then find a way to improve metrics. That kind of initiative goes a very long way. Essentially, the goal is to become indispensable. If you can get to this point, then your boss will start going to you for advice. The relationship dynamic will change from one of employee/employer to one of mutual respect.

— Nick Espinosa, [BSSi2](#) 



7. Get a Third Party Involved

HR is always available for advice, but make sure to be clear that your conversation about your boss is confidential. You can also approach your boss's boss. However, this can be dangerous territory, as your boss may feel you went above them. When talking to any third party about your boss, be sure to point out the positive aspects of your boss as well as your concerns.

— Jayne Mattson, [Keystone Associates](#) 



8. Just Leave — Even If You Work for Yourself!



When you don't get along with the boss, there are really only two solutions: transfer to another area, or quit.

Save yourself the stress. Life is short. Don't spend too much time trying to deal with a jerk. It's not worth it.

I work for myself. Sometimes, I'm a jerk. On those days, I fire myself and go to the movies. Later, I will go for a walk on the beach and tell myself I will do X-Y-Z better, and then I forgive myself and hire me back.

— *Bonnie Russell*, [Personal Public Relations](#) 

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