

Five ways to deal with a boss who is a bully

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We are all faced with situations that can make us lose our cool on a daily basis. But staying calm and chalking out the right course of action is the key when your boss is a bully. ET finds out five ways by which you can overcome a bully boss.

1. Avoidance is Key

Some people can't progress without pulling people down, they are behaviour by nature, so you must avoid giving them an excuse to lash out at you. Such people cannot be avoided, so tact comes to play here. When needed, confront them and be completely prepared with data and follow-ups, so you don't seem accusatory without evidence. Bullies require fuel (or excuses) to get fired up, so always be on your guard.

To avoid any controversial conversations especially in public meetings, viewpoints can be shared individually, says Rohit Kapoor, chief operating officer-South Asia at EFS Facilities Services.

2. Have Calm Talk

If your boss's behaviour is negative and is affecting your confidence, alongside the ability to perform, try and express your discomfort in a private conversation, preferably over a coffee at a non-official place. Put your point across firmly without being accusatory. Discuss the actual problems of any given task/assignment with your boss and ask him/her to give his inputs. If you show your genuine intent in achieving your goals and have valid reasons for being unable to achieve it, people do understand. Don't go and have a conversation with him if he is simply unaware of how his comments are affecting you, you will naturally be less bellicose, says Rajiv Kumar, CEO, StoreHippo.

3. Be Professional

'Stay Calm' is the mantra, yet it is easier said than done. Yet, in a professional environment, one needs to maintain a neutral demeanour. Professionals should curb their urge to react, especially when dealing with bullying bosses. Not all statements require a retort. At no stage should one appear unprofessional due to emotional instability. This leaves a negative impression among colleagues and managers alike. "Also, one must keep a neutral tone when interacting with such bosses in public and not engage in slanging matches," says Kapoor.

4. Speak to a Mentor

Usually, mentors are trusted colleagues and will guide you in the right direction whenever you face a problem. You could also reach out to the HR. Owing to their prior experience in dealing with such situations, they can help you effectively as they are reasonably far removed from the situation, said Kumar of StoreHippo.

5. No Personal Talk

Never divulge or discuss matters which are personal/family related with your bullying boss. This can provide them an undue advantage to emotionally exploit your vulnerabilities. Avoid unnecessary complications in the office and keep it all about work, always, said Kapoor.

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