

Interpersonal Skills and Your Relationship with Your Boss

Feeling good about your interactions with the person above you at work means fewer worries and less stress to take home. And your current supervisor can be helpful in the future—to write a letter of reference, recommend you for a position or play some other professional role in your life.

Many additional benefits come from a strong relationship with your boss, including these important ones:

- Greater responsibility
- Feedback on how to improve your performance
- Trust that you can be depended on
- Raises and promotions



How interpersonal skills can strengthen your relationship

People can find plenty of things to complain about at work, and the boss is a good target. But don't let yourself become one of those who blames everything on the person above you. Use the following interpersonal skills to build your employee-supervisor relationship:

- Remember your boss is human. You have no idea what challenges he or she faces, including whether the boss's boss or customers are applying pressure.
- Be helpful when possible and stay out of the way if you can't contribute to the solution.
- Communicate, but don't probe into what is wrong when you sense the supervisor wants to be left alone.
- Be efficient and effective in your own work so you don't add to the boss's problems.
- Don't complain about your boss to coworkers.

If you feel your relationship with your boss has changed, don't delay in trying to repair the damage. Analyze the problem: "Am I being dependable, trustworthy, effective at my work?" "Am I hard to work with?" "What can I do to improve the situation?" "Do I need to talk to my boss about the situation?"

Questions to ask yourself if the relationship feels shaky

A troubled relationship with your boss affects your morale and productivity and, ultimately, your chances for keeping your job. It's not hard to recognize when the boss-employee relationship is going downhill, but you need to keep your eyes and ears open for clues. If you feel tension in the relationship, ask yourself these questions:

- Has the supervisor's tone of voice or non-verbal behavior changed toward me?
- Am I getting fewer challenging assignments?
- Am I a positive person or do I come across as negative?
- Does my supervisor have to point out my mistakes over and over again?
- Do I feel left out of the loop?
- Am I excluded from meetings that I once attended?

Action: Think of a time when you and a boss, teacher, principal, sports coach or other person in authority could not develop a good relationship. What do you think was the problem? What interpersonal skills could you have used to improve the relationship?

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Note to teachers: Interpersonal skills rely on effective communication. Connect the topic of interpersonal skills with verbal and non-verbal communication so students see the relationship between the two. *Job Ready Career Skills* provides 230 lessons that play a role in building relationships. [Click here to see the topics and titles of the lessons.](#)

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