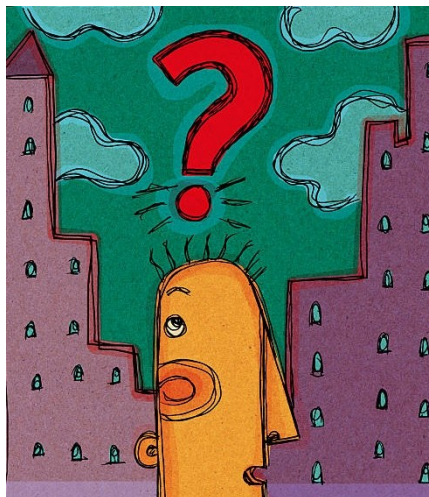


7 Insights of Great Bosses Who Actually Achieve Employee Engagement

Is being a great boss art or science?

Science

- Discipline
- Replicable
- Hypotheses tested by research
- Best practices and proven results

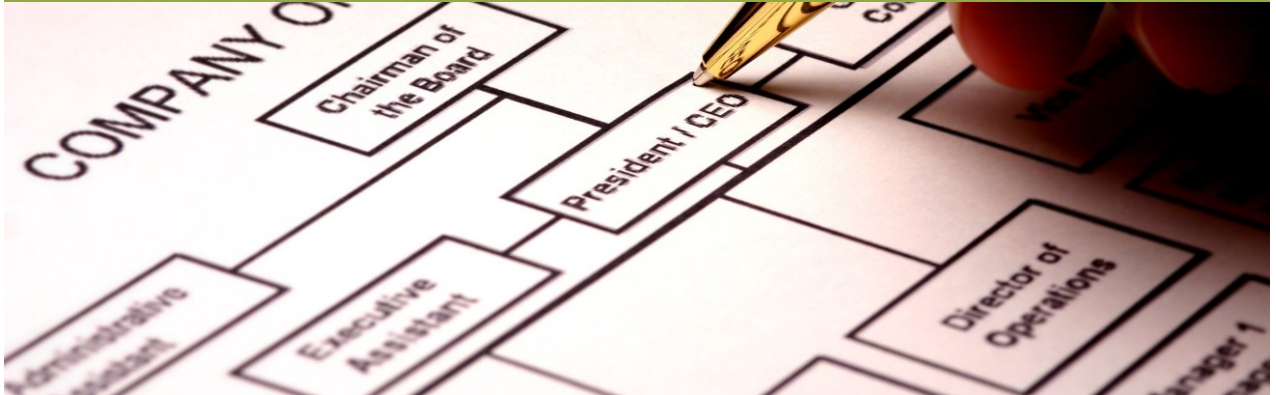


Art

- Inspiration
- Unique circumstances
- Application and interpretation
- Surprising results

What does it mean to be the boss?

a boss manages projects and supervises people



even (especially) when it's not easy

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3

Some bosses have a bad reputation



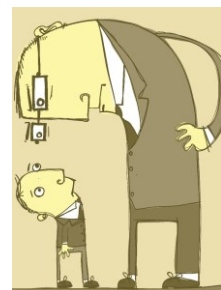
shouts orders



abuses power



punishes



belittles

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4

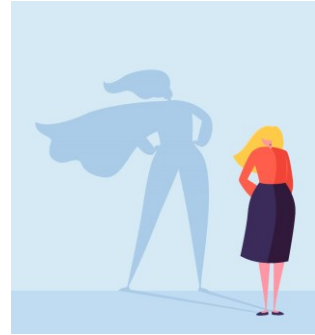
Boss should be a multifaceted role



juggler



protector



superhero

Bosses face real challenges



- time pressures
- budget constraints
- unclear requirements
- changing circumstances
- outdated policies (bad policies)
- unrealistic timelines
- organizational silos
- poor systems
- too much work

What do 'good' bosses do?

- coordinate projects
- develop policies
- determine budgets
- allocate resources
- delegate tasks
- conduct reviews
- respond to crises
- identify opportunities
- promote organizations
- generally get stuff done
- manage themselves



Great bosses do all of that, too

while eliciting the best work from each employee



and fostering legacy and loyalty

Seven insights of great bosses



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9

1

A great boss provides context, so employees know what happens in the organization around them and how they are relevant.



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10

A great boss provides context

- Context helps employees improve their work
 - Project or assignment
 - Organization
 - People and relationships
- Context helps employees find and create meaning
 - What is the direction of the organization?
 - How am I relevant?
 - How do I support the mission?
 - Does my work matter?

2

A great boss sets measurable goals and is clear about her expectations. She knows that little is more satisfying for her employees than achievement.



A great boss sets goals

- Employees, even the best ones, aren't mind readers
 - What you like (and don't like)
 - Organizational policy and culture
- Most employees want to do a good job at work
 - Personal satisfaction
 - Acknowledgement and recognition
- Employees are nearly four times more likely to be engaged when they are involved in setting goals

A great boss sets goals

- Great bosses don't just set goals, they also measure and follow up
- Great bosses help employees measure their own work
- A great boss' goals (for herself and her employees) are:

Specific
Measurable
Agreed
Realistic
Timed

3

A great boss is as particular as Goldilocks. They avoid the pitfalls of under-management while remaining alert to signs of micro-management.



Micromanager or undermanager?

- An employee has to check with their boss every time he's faced with a decision
Micromanager or undermanager?
- An employee has so much autonomy that no one gives feedback until a mistake is made?
Micromanager or undermanager?
- A boss is entrenched in their employee's tasks and projects.
Micromanager or undermanager?
- An employee needs help figuring out a problem and is encouraged to, "only come to me if you have solutions to suggest."
Micromanager or undermanager?

4

A great boss makes choices and follows through. He takes a proactive approach and refuses to adopt a victim's mentality.



A great boss makes choices

- When to shift priorities and when to stay the course
- How to respond to 'fire drills' and genuine crises
- How to address underperforming employees

Employees may not like the choice, but they generally prefer the clarity that results.

5

A great boss prevents anonymity. They take a genuine interest in each of their employees and demonstrate their interest with curiosity and empathy.



A great boss prevents anonymity

- A great boss knows it's okay to know
- How to express genuine interest (even if you're not sure you care)
 - Be curious
 - It's about knowing, not about liking or mimicry
 - Talk about the work
 - If nothing else, you have work in common
- Avoid Jekyll and Hyde

6

A great boss invites participation. She solicits her employees' input and feedback, using that information to improve her thinking and communication.



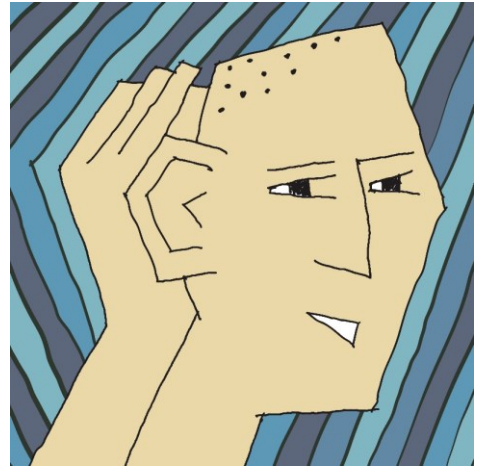
A great boss gives voice, not vote

- A great boss knows that, unlike our political system, work is rarely a democracy
- A great boss knows that employees know things she doesn't
- A great boss is clear about how input and feedback will be used

Don't ask for input if you don't want it

A great boss listens

- Be quiet
- Pay attention to your body language
- Give an occasional “uh huh” or nod
- Stay focused on the conversation
- Ask clarifying questions
- Make guesses about feelings
- Restate some of what is said
- You may not understand



7

A great boss remembers the platinum rule. She knows that each employee has different needs and preferences and adapts her management approach.



A great boss uses personality insight

- Someone who is **Analytical** might appreciate working through the data and research first with a focus on objectivity when talking through a problem with you
- Someone who is **Structural** might need practical guidelines for approaching a problem as well as time to think through the details associated with the situation
- Someone who is **Social** may need to think through the consequences for team members first and need assurance that you are concerned for people's welfare when problem solving
- Someone who is **Conceptual** might appreciate approaching the problem with completely visionary, big picture brainstorming before getting down to the details

A great boss knows same isn't fair

- Different employees may value different forms of rewards and recognition
- A great boss knows she can't customize everything, but that she can customize some things
- "Special treatment" based on performance is almost always legal and often appropriate



Preparing to manage individuals

1. Who is this person at work?
2. Why do I need to manage this person?
3. What do I need to talk about with this person?
4. How should I talk with this person?
5. Where should I talk with this person?
6. When should I talk with this person?

Source: *It's Okay to Be the Boss: The Step-by-Step Guide to Becoming the Manager Your Employees Need* by Bruce Tugan

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27

Review of the 7 things great bosses do

1. A great boss provides **context**, so employees know what happens in the organization around them and how they are relevant.
2. A great boss sets **measurable goals** and is clear about their **expectations**.
3. A great boss is like Goldilocks, **balancing** between the pitfalls of **under-management** and the traps of **micromanagement**.
4. A great boss makes **tough choices** with a proactive approach, refusing to adopt a victim's mentality.
5. A great boss **prevents anonymity**, taking a genuine interest in each employee and demonstrating that interest with curiosity and empathy.
6. A great boss **invites employees' input** and feedback and uses that information to improve thinking and communication.
7. A great boss remembers the **platinum rule**. She knows that each employee has different needs and preferences and adapts her management approach.

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28

The great bosses' secret...

15 minutes

Each employee

One-on-one

Scheduled

Once a week



Really.

What to do for 15 minutes

- Talk like a coach
 - Steady and consistent
 - Methodical
 - Focused on minute detail
- Talk about the work
 - Priorities
 - Procedures and policies
 - Feedback
 - Resources needed
- Write stuff down

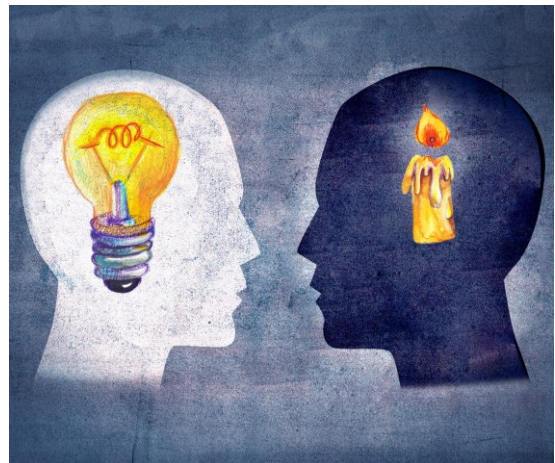


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31

Questions for the 15-minute meeting

1. How are things going?
2. What's working well?
3. What's not working?
4. What else do I need to know about?
5. How can I help? What do you need from me? Is there anything I'm doing that's getting in the way?



Learn more: https://www.allisonpartners.com/wwrn/entry/15_minutes_to_a_better_boss

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32

Use freewriting to prepare feedback

1. What do I wish I could say if I didn't have to worry about saying it right?
2. What am I afraid he or she will say or do?
3. Is it worth trying to give this feedback? What will happen if I give it? What will happen if I don't give it? If I don't give the feedback, how will I let it go?
4. How can I give this feedback constructively?
5. What else do I need to remember about our relationship as I approach this conversation?

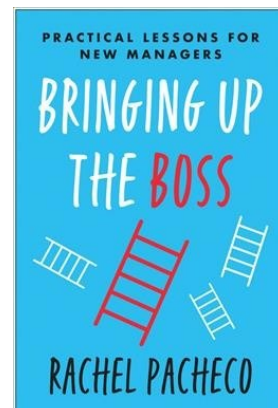
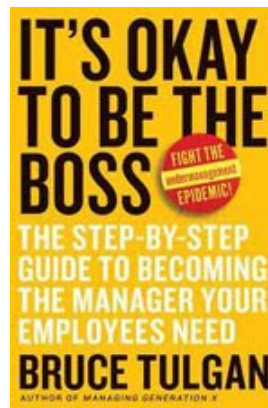
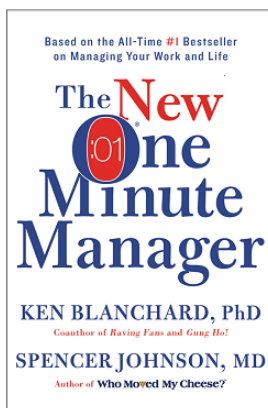


Learn more: https://www.allisonpartners.com/index.php/resources/entry/making_difficult_conversations_more_manageable

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33

Best boss books



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34

Best feedback books

- ***Turn Your Face: How to Be Heard and Get What You Want Most of the Time*** by Barbara Linney
https://www.allisonpartners.com/wwwr/by_tag/tag/turn_your_face
- ***Crucial Conversations*** by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, Al Switzler
https://www.allisonpartners.com/wwwr/by_tag/tag/crucial_conversations

To become a great boss ease in

- Review our blog posts
- Talk to your boss about your plan
- Share ***15 Minutes to a Better Boss*** from slide 50 with your boss and employees
- Talk to your employees as a group about your plan
- Start being the boss you want to be
 - Schedule meetings
 - Address concerns and resistance
 - Learn, try, learn some more

The great boss pledge

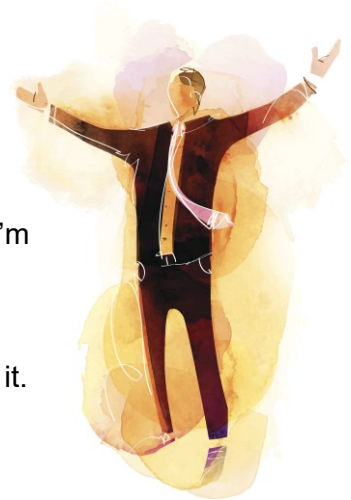
“Great news – I’m the boss!

I consider this a solemn responsibility. I’m going to make sure that everything goes well around here.

I’ll help you get work done very well, very fast, every day. I’m going to set you up for success every step of the way. I’ll help you solve problems as soon as they occur.

Count on me. When you need something, I’ll help you find it.

When you want something, I’m going to help you earn it.”




Source: *It’s Okay to Be the Boss: The Step-by-Step Guide to Becoming the Manager Your Employees Need* by Bruce Tugan

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37

Please stay in touch

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What We’re Reading Now blog <https://www.allisonpartners.com/wwrn>
(a member of our team posts every other Tuesday)

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38