

**HOW TO BE A**

**GREAT**

**BOSS**

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**LEARN THE**

**SEVEN TRAITS**

**ALL GREAT BOSSES HAVE**

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# Introduction

## Why You Need This Book

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People don't quit their jobs because of bad pay. They quit because of bad bosses.

Of course, everyone complains about being underpaid when they're refilling their coffee cups or microwaving lunch, but surprisingly few employees quit because they are unhappy with their compensation.

A study by the Gallup organization gives credence to this point: James K. Harter, Gallup's chief scientist for workplace management, has demonstrated that at least 75 percent of voluntary turnover hinges on managerial relationships.

Further evidence comes from Google: A study of its workforce concluded that "what employees valued most were even-keeled bosses who made time for one-on-one meetings, who helped people puzzle through problems by asking questions, not dictating answers, and who took an interest in employees' lives and careers."

Google's research shows that people typically left the company for one of three reasons: One, they don't feel a connection to the company's mission; two, they

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don't like or respect their co-workers; and, three, they have a terrible boss. The third reason accounted for far more turnover than the other two.

Given that your employees place enormous value on their relationships with you, it is imperative that you establish and maintain a positive work environment. The first step: Recognize that no one possesses innate "boss" skills. You have to learn how to be a boss.

Many people are promoted to a supervisory position because they did a good job in a subordinate position. But the job of a boss is very different, and sometimes it requires counterintuitive thinking and actions.

Let's say you have an employee who's not contributing to team efforts or who constantly misses deadlines. Logic would dictate that, as the boss, you should monitor him closely, coach him regularly, and possibly discipline him. Instead, why not ask him what he wants? Maybe he's unproductive because he's not feeling challenged and would shine with a different kind of assignment. Perhaps there are interpersonal issues between this individual and his colleagues that you haven't noticed. A conversation in a safe, positive environment can reveal these issues and help resolve them. With effort and commitment on your part, you can become the boss your employees deserve.

This book shows you exactly how to do that. No matter where you reside on the continuum between great boss and bad boss, there's always room for improvement. The key is to understand - and adopt - the seven traits of great bosses.

## **How to Be a Great Boss**

They are:

- 1. A great boss empowers people.**
- 2. A great boss provides growth opportunities.**
- 3. A great boss trains through feedback.**
- 4. A great boss makes tough choices.**
- 5. A great boss gives thanks.**
- 6. A great boss creates a positive workplace culture.**
- 7. A great boss shows people their futures.**

## **Am I a Great Boss – How Do You Rate?**

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This self-evaluation will help you see exactly where you stand today in terms of your skills as a boss and where you need to go next.

### **1. I give public praise for a job well done.**

- Never
- Seldom
- Periodically
- Often
- Always

### **2. I critique and discipline people in private.**

- Never
- Seldom
- Periodically
- Often
- Always

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**3. I provide frequent feedback.**

- Never
- Seldom
- Periodically
- Often
- Always

**4. I hold employees accountable.**

- Never
- Seldom
- Periodically
- Often
- Always

**5. I give underperforming employees a chance to improve.**

- Never
- Seldom
- Periodically
- Often
- Always

**6. I relish difficult conversations.**

- Never
- Seldom
- Periodically
- Often
- Always

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**7. I fire people when necessary.**

- Never
- Seldom
- Periodically
- Often
- Always

**8. I share credit.**

- Never
- Seldom
- Periodically
- Often
- Always

**9. I promote my team's accomplishments to my peers and bosses.**

- Never
- Seldom
- Periodically
- Often
- Always

**10. I praise people for their positive contributions.**

- Never
- Seldom
- Periodically
- Often
- Always

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**11. I say thank you.**

- Never
- Seldom
- Periodically
- Often
- Always

**12. I make sure people know I have their backs.**

- Never
- Seldom
- Periodically
- Often
- Always

**13. I delegate responsibility.**

- Never
- Seldom
- Periodically
- Often
- Always

**14. I make it safe for people to fail.**

- Never
- Seldom
- Periodically
- Often
- Always

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**15. I share the big picture.**

- Never
- Seldom
- Periodically
- Often
- Always

**16. I coach and mentor people and offer them the opportunity to learn.**

- Never
- Seldom
- Periodically
- Often
- Always

**17. I provide challenging work assignments that promote individual growth.**

- Never
- Seldom
- Periodically
- Often
- Always

**18. I openly share my experiences, including my failures.**

- Never
- Seldom
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

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**19. I prepare people for their next promotion.**

- Never
- Seldom
- Periodically
- Often
- Always

**20. I support company traditions and events.**

- Never
- Seldom
- Periodically
- Often
- Always

<b>Scoring Numbers</b>	<b>Never = 1</b> <b>Seldom = 2</b> <b>Sometimes = 3</b> <b>Often = 4</b> <b>Always = 5</b>
<b>Total score for 20 questions</b>	

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<b>Total score</b>	<b>How Do You Rate?</b>
<b>0 to 20</b>	<i>You're in trouble. Save your job.</i>
<b>21 to 40</b>	<i>You're in need of a turnaround. It's time to move in a new direction.</i>
<b>41 to 60</b>	<i>You're doing okay but not great. You need to expand your effectiveness.</i>
<b>61 to 80</b>	<i>You're above average. Your aim should be to refine your effectiveness.</i>
<b>81 to 100</b>	<i>You're in the big leagues. You're ready to move you from being a good boss to being a great boss.</i>

This book can help bosses at each level. Let's get started.

# The Seven Traits of a Great Boss

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Let's examine each of the seven great-boss traits in more detail.

- 1. A great boss empowers people.**
- 2. A great boss provides growth opportunities.**
- 3. A great boss trains through feedback.**
- 4. A great boss makes tough choices.**
- 5. A great boss gives thanks.**
- 6. A great boss creates a positive workplace culture.**
- 7. A great boss shows people their futures.**

# Chapter 1

## A Great Boss Empowers People

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### **Delegate responsibility, not just tasks**

How does a great boss empower his or her employees? By delegating responsibility, not just tasks. And what does empowerment mean to great bosses? They act with confidence, entrusting people with meaningful work and responsibility, not just tasks.

Too many bosses look at their own responsibilities and figure out how to off-load mundane, boring, or risky jobs. That's dumping, not delegating. A great boss, by contrast, gives employees a chance to shine, assigning projects that are challenging but not overwhelming. This increases the probability of success for all employees.

### **Share the grand design with your team**

When delegating a project to an individual or a team, connect the dots for those involved. You, of course, should already know how the project fits into the company's bigger picture – where your organization's senior leadership is headed and what they want and expect from you. What you need your people to deliver is

not a standalone piece. It is part of the mosaic called “our company,” and your team needs to know where it fits.

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### **Trust them to perform**

Once you've apprised people of the bigger picture, encourage them to take on a challenge and trust them to do what needs doing. Your trust is critical. If you delegate a project, get out of the way. Let people design and shape the work themselves. Don't expect the job to be done exactly as you would have done it. Different people have different approaches, and someone else's way may be just as creative and productive as yours.

### **Don't micro-manage**

Constantly checking on people is the equivalent of digging up seeds you've planted to see if they've sprouted yet. Micromanagers are never appreciated and micromanaging shows disrespect toward your team. If you've coached and trained someone to handle a task, allow that person to do the job without interference. Constant correction undermines confidence.

### **Provide clear communication**

When delegating, you must communicate openly. Discuss project components that various employees can tackle independently or in small groups. Encourage employees to listen and ask follow-up questions until they understand what you expect them to deliver. Devise a framework for getting periodic updates from the team to ensure that they are making progress. Otherwise, leave them alone.

Too many not-so-great bosses are threatened by delegation and letting go of an important job or project. The bad boss thinks no one can handle a given project

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the right way. In reality, it's the great boss who trusts staff members implicitly, because, after all, he or she trained them.

## **Identify people with potential**

When you delegate a task or a project, don't set people up to fail. Make sure the person or team on the receiving end is capable of delivering. Suppose you're looking for someone to take on your annual budgeting responsibilities, but no one in your group has the right skills. Mention the idea in a staff meeting and in performance reviews. One of your subordinates might show interest and volunteer to undergo training. Or if there's someone you think could learn the necessary skills, encourage that person to go for it.

## **Provide the freedom to fail**

While it's important to set people up to succeed, they also need the freedom to fail. Knowing that a mistake is not a death sentence gives people the freedom to explore, venture into uncharted territory and experiment with new ideas.

## **Take Action Now**

Schedule time this week to:

1. Delegate an important project.
2. Reduce micro-management impulses.
3. Encourage training for new responsibilities.
4. Use a failure as a teaching tool.

Start today. Small changes, implemented consistently over time, will make a big difference. You are on your way to being a great boss.

## Chapter 2

# A Great Boss Provides Growth Opportunities

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### **Developing vs. training**

It's important to make and understand the difference between developing and training. Training is job- or task-specific, whereas developing takes a broader view: It is about creating ways for your employees to become smarter, better, and stronger on the job. To be a great boss, you need to develop and train. Training is fairly easy to implement. If an employee needs to learn how to budget, for example, you can enroll that person in an online course or send them to a seminar. But if the employee needs better people skills or more executive presence, development is the order of the day. How does a great boss succeed at developing people? It begins with creativity.

### **Retain your best talent**

Leadership development is a win for both the organization and the individual employees. When you develop your top talent, you're creating a solid succession plan. You and your senior management can rest assured that your future leaders will be ready

when they are needed. This is a healthy move for the bottom line, of course. Not only are you preparing for the future, you're also retaining your best talent by providing them

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with exciting opportunities for personal and professional growth. When you do this, your people will reward you with their loyalty. Reduced turnover in the executive ranks means higher profits.

### **Challenge their creativity**

Encouraging employees to develop their creative skills can be a breath of fresh air that will sweep through your whole team. Let's say, for example, that you've been given the task of bringing in ten new clients during the next quarter. You could take the standard approach of deciding how many phone calls, meetings, and people you'll need. Or you could set up teams of two or three people and have each team come up with at least one never-before-tried idea. Such activities stimulate solution-focused thinking. Suddenly, a seemingly boring or difficult assignment becomes fun, interesting, and a giant leap forward in accomplishment for those involved.

### **Let them lead**

Giving up the leadership role and letting other people develop creative approaches challenges our natural tendency to maintain control over situations and outcomes. The myth of the Lone-Ranger type of manager, who can handle everything and anything on his or her own, continues to dominate the imagination of many executives. In the end, however, that method can lead you down a dead-end path.

To successfully relinquish some leadership responsibilities, start by redefining your expectations. Rather than, say, asking people to increase sales, how about

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asking them to develop five strategies that would increase sales 10 percent in thirty days. Remember, too, that even though you are sharing some of your previous responsibilities, you are ultimately still in charge. Make sure you are candid about what exactly your people are being asked to do. If your team knows precisely what you need and when you need it, they will likely meet, if not exceed, your expectations.

### **Offer coaches, mentors and advocates**

Setting those expectations while also providing growth opportunities is not a one-time effort. You need a continuous strategy, and you don't have to do it all yourself. Assemble your own team of experts, mentors, and coaches who can help your people grow.

I generally recommend a six-month coaching program that is tailored to each individual.

In addition to coaching, many leading companies have mentoring programs. But if your company does not have one, you can easily develop a pilot program on your own. Publicize your idea, and let both mentors and those being mentored volunteer. Never force anyone into a mentorship; engage only those who are ready, willing, and able.

Mentors are usually thought of as older, more experienced managers. Consider reverse mentoring. Let's say, for example, that Jim, a middle-aged technophobe who barely knows how to manipulate a mouse, let alone send a text message, could be paired with twenty-something Mark who could show him how to develop his social-media skills.

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In addition to coaches and mentors, advocates might reside in other departments or areas of your company and will speak up on behalf of you and your team. They could talk about your accomplishments to top managers and company executives. Or if they are clients, customers, or vendors who like what you're doing, they might be happy to say so. Of course, you are the ultimate advocate for your own people, and you should use every opportunity to broadcast their accomplishments throughout the company.

### **Take Action Now**

Schedule time this week to:

1. Have a meeting with your direct reports to discuss succession planning.
2. Set up a creative project challenge.
3. Give away a leadership role.
4. Find an advocate who is willing to promote your team's accomplishments.

You are responsible, not just for your own future and progress up the corporate ladder, but also for the success of your team and your company. Provide growth opportunities for your people and you will grow yourself exponentially.

## Chapter 3

# A Great Boss Trains through Feedback

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### **Make it Continuous**

Meaningful feedback should be a habit, not an event. Done properly, it's a great way to train your people. But if you're like most managers, you get a knot in your stomach when you're called upon for feedback, especially if it's negative. It's easy to be put off, but feedback, whether good or bad, is only effective when it's closely tied to an incident or behavior. Otherwise, it lacks power.

Your employees want and need an honest assessment of their performance so that they can improve. If you give feedback when an incident occurs, you'll give people the space to listen and take appropriate action.

### **Praise in Public**

The continuous approach applies to both positive and negative feedback. You may have heard of the sandwich method - that is, you say something positive, then deliver bad news, then follow up with another positive comment. That's a wrong-headed approach that makes both kinds of feedback largely ineffective.

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Once employees get used to it, they know the zinger is coming, so they don't even hear the positive comment.

It works much better to give positive feedback when it's due without coupling it to something else. Praise people in public as often as possible - in staff meetings, before clients and customers, and in front of other executives within the company. Practice using constructs such as:

- **Commend and encourage:**

*“That was a great report, Maggie. Could you expand the second part and bring it back next week so we can start implementing your idea?”*

- **Praise and express confidence:**

*“Seth here is by far our best programmer, Mr. Jones. I'm sure he'll be able to resolve your issues quickly.”*

- **Give credit:**

*“By the way, Bill, that campaign proposal you liked? Jenny was the one who put that together for us.”*

### Critique in Private

It's also part of your responsibility as a boss to give feedback about negative incidents and behaviors, but even negative feedback can be delivered in a way

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that generates positive results. Never deliver criticism in front of anyone other than the person involved; when a critique is necessary, encourage self-directed feedback as much as possible. When employees critique themselves, it's actually a confidence builder instead of a threat.

For example, let's say Amanda made a major mistake during a presentation to a new client. If you ask, "That meeting went badly, Amanda, what happened?" her first reaction will be to defend herself, which leaves little room for positive action.

Instead you could say: "You're a creative person, Amanda. I'll bet you've been thinking about that presentation. What do you think you'll do differently next time?" You're giving her a chance to look good and to create her own solutions.

### ***Take Action Now***

Schedule time this week to do three things (and keep doing them):

1. Praise an employee in front of other employees.
2. Praise an employee in front of your boss or other company executive.
3. Handle an employee problem with self-directed feedback.

Of course you're still the boss and you are ultimately responsible for your group's performance. Feedback that makes a difference comes out of your overall relationship with your people. Giving feedback from a positive place helps you establish both credibility and trust. When you have those elements as your context, feedback can be the growth hormone that helps all your people win.

## Chapter 4

# A Great Boss Makes the Tough Choices

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Life is not all sunshine and roses, even for a great boss. Sometimes, hard choices are inevitable, and that can mean getting tough with people. It can require way more than feedback, coaching, and discipline. It can even mean giving someone the boot.

### **The High Cost of Poor Performance**

It's critically important for you to make the tough choices, and here's why: Underperforming employees can drag down the morale of entire teams and departments, directly affecting your bottom line.

A recent survey conducted by Robert Half International (RHI) highlights the problem. In interviews with 1,400 supervisors and managers, RHI found that leaders spend some 17 percent of their time, almost one full day a week, managing poor performers. While none of us can avoid dealing with problem employees, we can head off some problems by paying more attention to the hiring process.

### **Re-examine your recruiting**

If you know you're spending too much time and energy on your problem employees, take a close look at your hiring and recruitment. Start by putting the

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following four don'ts into practice. You will see immediate up-front improvement if you:

1. **Don't take unilateral action.** Instead, ask for input from colleagues and other managers regarding an existing job opening. Find out what skills and competencies your sounding boards think are important. Include those in your advertising and share them with your recruiting firm.
2. **Don't rely on the Internet as your sole recruiting tool.** Instead, use your networking skills to connect with potential talent. Personal interactions and recommendations tend to be more credible than electronic résumés.
3. **Don't wait for perfection.** There's a difference between the skills you must have for any given position and those that can be developed on the job. When you spot a candidate who fits the team and work environment and has most of the skills you're looking for, hire that person.
4. **Don't hold out for a bargain.** Offer your candidate a competitive compensation package, not a low-ball number. Remember that poor performance and high turnover will hurt you in the long run. Losing or firing a mid-level manager can cost a company as much as 150 percent of the manager's annual salary.

### The Power of Positive Discipline

No matter how well you manage the hiring process, you'll encounter performance problems. Not every problem employee has to be terminated immediately, of course. Early intervention, backed with positive discipline, may turn around a thorny situation before it comes to firing an employee.

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What is positive discipline? It is a collaborative, two-way discussion between you and a difficult employee, not you dressing down the culprit and criticizing his or her performance. A lapse in judgment or a violation of company policy can be remedied with positive discipline. In such situations, you should schedule a one-on-one meeting in which you coach rather than criticize, where you and your employee work together to resolve the issue at hand.

First, the two of you need to agree that a problem exists, then work out a course of action. Ask the employee to commit to the process and ask what he or she is going to do to solve the problem. Then set a date on which you will meet for a progress report.

### **Avoid avoidance**

Even when discipline can be meted out in a positive manner, it's tempting to come up with reasons not to have difficult conversations with employees. Discipline and follow-up are time consuming, and confrontation and conflict are draining.

Rather than getting mired in this endless loop, seize your responsibilities as a leader and help a problem employee improve. Provide all the resources, coaching, training, and support your employee needs to invigorate his or her performance, and, in many cases, he or she will do just that. But if improvement is not evident in the agreed-upon time frame, it's time to let the person go.

### **Fire when ready**

Firing an employee is never easy. It's awkward and uncomfortable, even if you're delighted to see the person go.

Start by making sure your procedural bases are covered. Work with your HR department or legal team to be sure you're in compliance with all policies and

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regulations; everything in the process must be documented. Typically, someone from HR will be present when you're terminating an employee. A witness provides important support for you and can corroborate what you say and do in case the situation deteriorates.

The meeting should be short. Practice what you're going to say ahead of time, and write down key points so you won't forget anything. Be very specific about your previous expectations and agreements and how they went unmet. Your conversation should be factual, straightforward, and, above all, neutral. Don't let yourself be drawn into a debate.

Be empathetic. Even if an employee is a near-total failure, he or she deserves respect. Think how you would want to be treated if the roles were reversed. Say thank you and offer your best wishes for the future.

Know that, however difficult it was, you have done your best for yourself, your team, and your company. That's what makes a great boss.

### **Take Action Now**

Schedule time this week to do the following:

1. Take stock of your department or team and make a list of underperforming employees.
2. Schedule disciplinary meetings with the employees on your list; keep them positive.
3. If you have an employee who has to be let go, meet with HR to develop a course of action.

## Chapter 5

# A Great Boss Gives Thanks

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Saying “thank you” is something we often do without much thought, and sometimes we don’t do it at all. Now is the time to become aware of the power of gratitude.

Writing in the *Graziadio Business Review*, a publication of Pepperdine University’s Business School, Dr. Charles Kerns says, “Gratitude is not just a ‘feel good’ emotion when it comes to organizational life. It can benefit an organization in many ways. When an employee believes his or her superiors are grateful for his or her work, the employee will benefit by having an improved sense of worth to the organization.”

So how can you lead with an attitude of gratitude?

### **Make it a habit**

Start showing your gratitude by composing a list of your staff members. Next to each person’s name, record their positive qualities, skills, and talents. Make a point of acknowledging and thanking people for what they do well. Keep at it until “thank you” becomes a daily habit.

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#### Make it public

One manager I know starts every meeting with shout-outs acknowledging individuals who have gone above and beyond their regular duties or contributed something specific to their group's accomplishments. The shout-outs are often accompanied by coffee gift cards or some other small token of appreciation.

#### Make it specific

When you thank someone, whether in public or private, be specific - mention exactly what that person did to earn your gratitude. "Thanks for pulling that presentation together on such short notice, Mary" is a far more meaningful gesture than "Thanks for all your hard work, Mary." When an employee feels appreciated for a specific act or behavior, he or she is more likely to repeat it in the future.

If saying frequent "thank you's" is a relatively new activity for you, make sure you don't come across as insincere. If you haven't thanked anyone in a month and you're suddenly throwing gratitude around like rice at a wedding, your people aren't going to buy it.

One technique used by successful managers is to write notes to the people on their teams who are making positive contributions. The personal touch carries more weight, so make the note handwritten if you can, but e-mail, text, or even voicemail will work, too. And remember to send a copy of that note or e-mail to your boss.

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### Share the credit

If you're lucky, your boss has already mastered the attitude of gratitude and you're getting plenty of public and private praise for your team's

accomplishments. If that's the case, make sure to pass that praise on. Forego the opportunity to make yourself look good by taking it back to your team; let them share the warm feelings. After all, everything your team accomplishes will reflect positively on you, and the more you reinforce their accomplishments, the better they will perform.

### Brag about it

When something good happens in your department, spread the word. If one of your team members nails a presentation or brings in a new client, send an e-mail to the influential people above you as well as peers in other departments. If Joe comes up with a money-saving idea, publicize it within the company and be sure he gets the credit.

While raising your team's profile within the company is important, bragging about your team's accomplishments to clients, customers, vendors, and others in your business network should also be part of your "great boss" strategy. You never know when or where someone will mention your name in a positive way.

When you give thanks to your employees, you are letting them know that they are valued and important. When they feel appreciated, their loyalty to you and your organization grows exponentially. The end result? Greater productivity, less turnover, and a happier work environment for everyone concerned.

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**Take Action Now**

Schedule time this week to:

1. Create a list of your employees and their positive qualities and contributions.
2. Write at least one thank-you note or e-mail to a team member.
3. Brag about a team member to a client or your boss.

## Chapter 6

# A Great Boss Creates a Positive Workplace Culture

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Not long ago, Deloitte, the accounting and consulting firm, questioned executives and employees about culture in the workplace. Ninety-four percent of executives and 88 percent of employees agreed that a positive workplace culture was important to business success. Yet, just 19 percent of executives and 15 percent of employees felt such a culture was the norm in their own organizations. In short, the gap between expectations and reality is wide. People at all levels want a positive workplace culture, but they seldom get it. What can you as a boss do about that?

There is no commandment that says work has to be drudgery. You spend at least one-third of your life in the workplace, so why not create a place that is comfortable for you and your people?

Here's how to do that.

## **How to Be a Great Boss**

### **Act like a peer**

Plenty of managers let their egos take the lead. Don't be one of them. If you act as though you're a cut above, better than everyone else, you'll have few friends and even fewer happy employees. When you become distant and emotionally detached, or when you constantly tout your position and power, it makes you seem small and keeps you from connecting with people.

### **Management by wandering around**

Get out from behind your desk and connect one-on-one with team leaders and frontline employees. Inquire about their day and ask how things are going. "What can I do to make your job easier?" is a great way to start a meaningful conversation. As you learn about the challenges your people are facing, you can more easily work together to come up with creative ideas and solutions.

Make yourself available. Limit the time you spend on the phone and in meetings to give yourself time for casual conversations or problem-solving discussions with your people.

### **Do whatever it takes**

Moreover, people need to know that you have their backs; when the going gets tough, you'll get down and dirty with them if necessary. Will you drive across town or fly across the country at a moment's notice to help a staff member close a deal? Will you pull an all-nighter to help your team prepare a crucial presentation? Will you waffle or ask a lot of questions. No, you will just do what has to be done. Send the message that it's not my job or your job, it's *our* job

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### **Share your story**

As you connect with people, whether by wandering around or pitching in whenever needed, have the courage to be vulnerable. Share your failures. Talk about the mistakes you've made and the lessons you've learned.

One young manager I know asked his boss for advice about a promotion he didn't get. Rather than equivocate, the boss candidly shared a tough lesson that left the boss marooned in his current job. Trying to make himself seem indispensable, the boss had failed to find and train his replacement, leaving him stuck where he was. Stories like that are tough to hear and even tougher to tell, but they can make a huge difference to someone's career.

Everyone has a past, and some of our pasts aren't all that pretty. Take my friend Becky. She's a high-school drop-out who lived in foster homes and became a single mom at eighteen. But Becky also had a mentor, a volunteer at the local Boys and Girls Club, who saw her potential and coached her through her GED and on to community college and ultimately a degree in business. Today, Becky is a successful executive who freely shares her story for two reasons: First, it encourages anyone who feels they don't have a chance to succeed because of their background, and, second, it inspires people to give back by mentoring others.

Don't feel as if you have to come up with a highly choreographed production to create a great environment. You can build a cohesive team just by chatting with your people over coffee, relaxing over drinks, letting your guard down, and showing that you are a regular human being. As you grow more comfortable in your leadership role, sharing your story will be second nature. That's the mark of a great boss. That's when leadership starts to be fun.

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***Take Action Now***

Schedule time this week to:

1. Spend at least fifteen minutes each day walking around and talking to people about what they are doing and what they need. Keep notes about your conversations for follow-up.
2. Look for an opportunity to talk about one of your failures and what you learned from it.
3. Take a team member out for coffee or lunch. Have fun.

## Chapter 7

# A Great Boss Shows People Their Future

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One of your staff members is lifting a glass or two with friends at a local watering hole after work when a stranger wanders into the group. They strike up a conversation.

“So, what do you do?” the stranger asks.

Will your staff member say:

- (a) “I’m an accounting clerk at XYZ Corporation.”
- (b) “I’m part of the team at XYZ Corporation that’s bringing the next million-dollar widget to market.”

If you’re a great boss, the answer is b.

### **Paint a big picture**

Your employees work in a more circumscribed universe than yours, and you probably work in a more circumscribed universe than the one your CEO occupies. When your boss makes a decision from his position high atop the company, you and your staff will likely view that decision, at least initially, through the prism of how it affects you. Your job, as a great boss, then is to expand people’s universes.

### **How to Be a Great Boss**

Some information will be confidential, of course, such as pending mergers, acquisitions, and new products in development. But there's still plenty of information that's not top-secret. Make it a point to cultivate relationships with C-level people in your company. Get them to share their visions with you and ask what's appropriate to share with your staff. Then do it. Start every staff meeting with big-picture information - sales figures, stock prices, future plans. Make sure your people know they are an important part of something larger than themselves.

### **Let your stars shine**

When people can see an organization's future, they are more likely to make it *their* future. Encourage them to brainstorm big-picture solutions to departmental issues and problems. Employees who are empowered to think and act on a larger stage may surprise you with the degree of their initiative and creativity.

The secret to developing superstar employees means you need to be a coach first and a manager second. This does NOT mean sitting down across the desk once a year to discuss "performance." Annual reviews don't provide quality feedback, seldom devote time to setting goals, and often are based largely on the recent past, rather than focusing on the future.

The coaching approach, on the other hand, allows you to regularly interact with your team, giving them the tools they need to grow, develop, stretch, and move ahead. It requires a lot more energy and time than the traditional review process; however, the results will pay off multiple times over with a staff that is motivated and committed.

## How to Be a Great Boss

### Lead by example

You must have the freedom and level of comfort needed to speak up on your own behalf and on behalf of your people. Organizations remain stuck in the *status quo* when people know how to do things better but are afraid to speak up.

Unfortunately that silence may preserve your career, but it can damage the organization and inhibit your future prospects. When people who have great ideas do not feel free to voice them, then those at the top have no energy for change. Things stay status quo. The people and the organization stop growing.

Healthy companies thrive on the free exchange of big-picture information. As a leader, you need to set an example by sharing that sort of information with the people on the front line.

That is what a great boss does.

### **Take Action Now**

Schedule time this week to:

1. Start your staff meeting with five minutes of big-picture company information and invite questions and discussion.
2. Hold at least one coaching conversation with a star employee. Ask what tools and experiences he or she needs to move forward.
3. Have casual, one-on-one conversations with your front-line people about what's going on in their jobs and how they see themselves fitting into your company's future.

# The Seven Secret Weapons of Great Bosses

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Great bosses have secrets. Why? Because you'll be a better person, a better manager, and, ultimately, a better boss if you figure them out for yourself. But just to give you a head start, here are seven secret weapons that great bosses use:

## 1. A great boss recruit's smart people.

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No boss or employee is good at everything, but a great boss figures out what's lacking and hires people who are smarter than he or she is to fill the gaps. Great bosses are confident of their ability to recruit people who are better than they are, and they know that when the team wins, everyone wins, including the boss.

## 2. A great boss generates publicity for others.

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A great boss will talk about you behind your back, singing your praises to his or her boss. He or she tells his colleagues about your money-saving idea or the new

### How to Be a Great Boss

customer you landed. He or she knows your potential and is secretly paving the way for your next move up the corporate ladder. Good bosses step out of the spotlight and put others in it. A true leader helps others shine by putting their success ahead of his or her own.

### 3. A great boss uses the right words.

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A great boss knows there's a big difference between an ordinary boss and a leader. An ordinary boss motivates through fear, while a great boss motivates by building self-confidence. An ordinary boss might blame you for your mistakes, while a great boss shows you how to fix them. An ordinary boss acts like she knows it all; a great boss asks questions and keeps on learning. A title can make you a boss, but your words and actions will tell whether you are a great boss.

### 4. A great boss forgives mistakes.

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Your boss overheard snide remarks you made about another manager or found out you blew a sales pitch to an important customer. He could have called you on the carpet, but he let it slide, knowing you were aware of your mistakes. Instead, he offered encouraging words and both of you moved on. Great people make mistakes. A great boss gives them a break.

## How to Be a Great Boss

### 5. A great boss knows who you are.

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There's more to knowing your people than just remembering their names. A great boss knows your name and your wife's name, too. She also knows that you have twin boys who love to play soccer and your mom just got back from a trip to Paris.

What might seem like irrelevant trivia is a sign that your great boss sees you as a real person. He or she wants to know what motivates you and what's going on in your life that might be cause for concern. A great boss sees the whole person. A great boss cares.

### 6. A great boss lets you think the great idea was your idea.

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When you're about to make a career-killing mistake, your great boss won't yell "Stop!" thereby making you feel like an idiot. Instead, he or she will gently coach you back to reality by asking questions and letting you figure out which path to take. Making your own decisions builds self-confidence and strengthens your ability to make sound choices.

### 7. A great boss waves the flag.

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A great boss is a believer. She sees her company as a collection of individual hopes and dreams, all linked to the corporate vision. She understands and

**How to Be a Great Boss**

supports this vision and knows how to inspire you to commit to it as well - to the success of your co-workers and, therefore, to the company at large.

Were you a great boss today? You become one by taking the action steps I've outlined and by consistently modeling the behavior you want your people to follow. Which of these secret weapons could you incorporate into your daily practice? The future is up to you.

**RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE BEST:** Acknowledged as one of the top 50 executive coaches in U.S. Global Gurus named Joel #14 on its list of top 30 global coaching experts.

**MASTER CERTIFIED COACH:** Only 2% of the 30,000 coaches worldwide achieve this distinction – the highest accreditation in the profession of coaching from the International Coach Federation.

**CLIENT LIST:** Google, Amazon, Starbucks, Procter & Gamble, Bank of America, Microsoft, Oracle, Deloitte, The Ritz-Carlton & many more.

**AUTHOR:** Written 7 books and over 300+ articles on leadership.

**YEARS OF EXPERIENCE:** 19 years of executive coaching and speaking experience.

### PROFESSIONAL SPEAKER

Joel is a sought-after keynote speaker and corporate trainer who is regularly called upon to address conferences across the country and around the world. He has delivered more than 1000 workshops, speeches and keynote addresses to groups such as the Commonwealth Club of California, the Pennsylvania Chamber of Commerce, the Kentucky Society of Human Resource Management, Wells Fargo Bank, Haas School of Business, Financial Women's Association, the University of California Berkeley, Marriott Hotels, Gap Inc., Cisco Systems, Eli Lilly, Autodesk, Charles Schwab, Bank of America, Accenture, Sapient Corporation, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Kohl's and The Ritz-Carlton Hotels.

### AUTHOR

Joel has written eleven books that are read in 25 countries. He also has contributed to the book *The Art and Practice of Leadership Coaching* (John Wiley and Sons, 2011); *Leader to Leader*, the award-winning quarterly journal launched by the Peter F. Drucker Foundation; and *PHR/SPHR Professional in Human Resources Certification Exam Guide*. His eleven books include:

- **Executive Presence:** 3 Ways to Convey Confidence and Command Respect as a Leader
- **16 Essential Qualities That Define Great Leaders:** Learn the Habits of the Most Successful
- **How to be a Great Boss:** Learn the 7 Traits of Great Bosses
- **Getting Ahead:** 3 Steps to Take Your Career to the Next Level
- **Difficult Conversations:** Practical Tactics for Crucial Communication
- **Time Management Mastery:** Stress-Free Productivity in the 7 Key Areas of Life
- **Are You Always Stressed and Hurrying at Work?** Learn to Break Your Rush Syndrome Cycle
- **Love Your Work:** Make the Job You Have the One You've Always Wanted
- **Get Paid What You're Worth:** How to Negotiate a Raise or Higher Starting Salary
- **Land Your Dream Job:** It's More Than a Job – It's the Fulfillment Of A Dream
- **Job Searching Made Easy:** Practical Guide to Find the Job You Need Fast

### EXECUTIVE COACH

Joel Garfinkle serves companies throughout the United States and in countries around the world. Here is a partial list of clients who have benefited from his coaching knowledge:

- Google
- Amazon
- Roche/Genentech
- Starbucks
- Toyota
- Deloitte
- IBM
- Microsoft
- Oracle
- NBC Universal
- Procter & Gamble
- Charles Schwab
- Visa International
- Warner Bros. Entertainment
- NBA

## SPEAKING TESTIMONIALS

*"Thanks again for the outstanding training. Your insight and expertise regarding the leadership values of perception and influence is outstanding. We received a great deal of positive feedback."*

**ORACLE – Chris Grim, Group Vice-President – Enterprise Performance Management**

*"You stole the show! Registrants told us that they thoroughly enjoyed the program. In fact, one woman said, "I learned more in the 1st 15 min of Joel's presentation than I do at many conferences."*

**PENNSYLVANIA CHAMBER OF BUSINESS & INDUSTRY – Susan Smith, Dir. of Customer Learning**

*"Your enthusiasm, style and heart enabled the team to open up and really listen to the message. We hope to be able to bring you back every year to help us keep on track."*

**CISCO SYSTEMS, INC. – Kathy Weiner, Enterprise Marketing, Sr. Manager Strategic Alliances**

*"Over 96% of my employees said they would enjoy hearing him speak again!"*

**GENSLER – Karen Habegger, Human Resources Manager**

*"I thought your 'Unlock Gifts at Work' presentation was right on target for what we needed. I recommend that any organization needing to get the most out of its people use Joel Garfinkle."*

**WELLS FARGO BANK – Jim Keene, Regional Manager**

*"Joel is a phenomenal speaker and instructor who's able to capture the audience's attention while engaging each person on an individual basis. I highly recommend him as an instructor."*

**UCLA EXTENSION – Jeanna Trammell, Technical Management Program Manager**

## EXECUTIVE COACHING TESTIMONIALS

*"His feedback and encouragement were instrumental in my quest to find the better leader in me. Joel should be a member of every executive's personal board of advisors!"*

**BROTHER INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION – Henry J. Sacco, Jr., VP and Chief Legal Officer**

*"As CEO of a media holding company that manages assets of US\$34 billion, Joel's executive coaching had a significant impact on developing the strategic capabilities of my 12 direct reports. They improved both their direction setting and their execution. I learned to guide my leadership team so that we created a mind-set of urgency, ownership and accountability."*

**IPG MEDIABRANDS BENELUX – Diederik Breijer, Chief Executive Officer**

*"Joel Garfinkle is one of the most effective and innovative executive coaches I've worked with. Thanks to his guidance, I was able to push my limits and discover my true potential as a senior leader."*

**ORACLE – Amalia Sterescu – VP Oracle Customer Services**

*"What makes Joel an outstanding coach is his ability to get you to really think about your goals, identify what you need to change and help you execute on the changes."*

**NBC UNIVERSAL – Priya Swamy, Vice-President**

*"Joel's coaching delivered immediate results that impacted my company's bottom line. I increased my ability to direct and lead people which has amplified my influence."*

**CISCO SYSTEMS – Andrew Peters, Manager, Enterprise Marketing**

*"Because of Joel's coaching, my team has learned to have more respect for me as a leader."*

**ELI LILLY AND COMPANY – Eric A. Eilers, Director of Regional Managed Markets**

## FREE RESOURCES FOR YOU

### Joel's Library of 2-Minute Videos

Joel provides 2-minute video clips that show him in action as a motivational speaker, providing valuable workplace insights to his audience.

→ **Subscribe to Joel's YouTube channel:**

<https://www.youtube.com/user/joelgarfinkle/>

### Articles

Free articles that provide practical, "how-to" information and insights to help you become an effective leader and boost your career success. These articles cover a variety of topics, including executive leadership, workplace issues and career advancement.

→ <https://garfinkleexecutivecoaching.com/executive-coaching-articles>

→ <https://joelinspirationalspeaker.com/articles/>

→ <https://careeradvancementblog.com/articles/>

### Sign-up for Free Newsletter and Blog

#### Fulfillment@Work Email Newsletter

This weekly report provides a one minute read full of best practice articles, famous leader's profiles and inspiring videos. Join a worldwide community of over 10,000 people.

→ **Sign up at** <https://garfinkleexecutivecoaching.com/fulfillment-at-work-newsletter/>

#### Career Advancement Blog

Joel's bi-monthly blog provides articles with action steps on common workplace issues.

→ **Sign up at** <https://careeradvancementblog.com/>

### Let's Connect – LinkedIn / Twitter / Facebook



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/joelgarfinkle>



<https://twitter.com/joelgarfinkle>



<https://www.facebook.com/garfinkleexecutivecoaching>

## EXECUTIVE COACHING AND SPEAKING SERVICES

### Executive Coaching Services <https://garfinkleexecutivecoaching.com/>

Joel has 20 years of first-hand experience working with thousands of executives, senior managers, directors and employees at the world's leading companies.

- Executive presence coaching: Learn how to convey confidence as a business leader, be respected as an authority, and have a professional magnetism that influences others.
- Career advancement coaching: Learn how to take your career to the next level based on his book *Getting Ahead*.
- Lead through influence: Learn how to become an influential leader by adopting the five key traits all influential people have: (1) Solid reputation, (2) Enhanced skill-set, (3) Executive presence, (4) Superior likeability and (5) Power to persuade.

### Speaking Services <https://joelinspirationalspeaker.com/>

Joel Garfinkle is sought-after keynote speaker, corporate trainer and online webinar facilitator. Book Joel to energize and educate your keynotes, meetings, conventions, and seminars with his compelling and inspirational speaking style.

1. EXECUTIVE PRESENCE: 4 Ways to Convey Confidence and Command Respect as a Leader
2. CAREER ADVANCEMENT: Release Untapped Potential of Your Underutilized Leaders
3. THE INVISIBLE LEADERS: How to Find Them and Help Them Shine
4. DEVELOPING INFLUENTIAL LEADERS: 5 Traits That Create High-Impact leadership
5. POWER OF PERCEPTION: Reputations Are Built on Perception
6. MAKING TIME FOR THE WORK THAT MATTERS: Learn How to Prioritize Your Work for Maximum Impact
7. UNPLUG, DISENGAGE AND DISCONNECT: How to Create Balance in Your Work and Your Life
8. STOP AVOIDING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS: Practical Tactics for Crucial Communication

## PEOPLE DON'T LEAVE BAD JOBS. *THEY LEAVE BAD BOSSES.* DON'T LET THAT HAPPEN TO YOU.

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No one is born with “boss” skills. You need to learn how to step up to the role. Maybe you were promoted to boss status because you did a good job as an employee. But it's going to take more than your good track record to succeed.

*How to Be a Great Boss* is filled with anecdotes and success stories. You'll learn how to empower your employees, how to train and motivate through feedback, how to create a positive workplace culture, and much more.

In this book, Joel illustrates how developing the seven core competencies of a great boss can bring every boss from good to great. Here are the seven key qualities that make a great boss:

- 1. EMPOWERS EMPLOYEES**
- 2. PROVIDES GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES**
- 3. TRAINS THROUGH FEEDBACK**
- 4. MAKES THE TOUGH CHOICES**
- 5. GIVES THANKS**
- 6. CREATES A POSITIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE**
- 7. SHOWS EMPLOYEES THE FUTURE**

Each section of the book provides you with a do-it-now challenge—three or four actions you can take immediately that will enhance your good boss qualities and put you on the great boss fast track.

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**Joel Garfinkle** is recognized as one of the top 50 executive coaches in America. Global Gurus named Joel #14 on its list of the top 30 global coaching experts. He is also a Master Certified Coach (MCC) — the highest level of achievement in coaching — and author of 11 books and over 300 articles on leadership. His client list for coaching and corporate training includes Google, Amazon, Starbucks, Bank of America, Microsoft, Oracle, Deloitte, Ritz-Carlton, Genentech, NBC, the NBA, and many other prestigious companies.