



Managing Up

How to Move Up, Win at Work and Succeed With Any Type of Boss

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

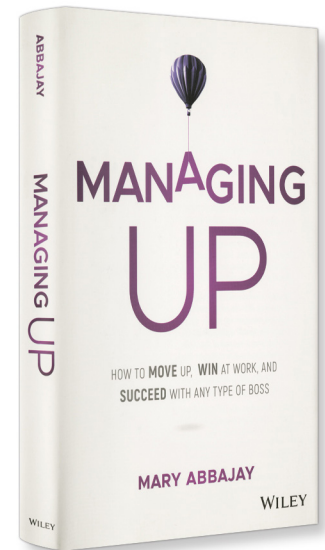
Managing Up is your guide to the most valuable “soft skill” your career has ever seen. It’s not about sucking up or brownnosing; it’s about figuring out who you are, who your boss is and finding where you meet. It’s about building real relationships with people who have influence over your career.

Author Mary Abbajay helps you build the sort of relationships that foster more communication, collaboration, cooperation and understanding between people at different levels of power, with a variety of perspectives and skills. This type of bridge-building strengthens your reputation for effectiveness and fit, so you can start skipping rungs on the ladder as you build a strong, successful career.

Real-world strategies give you a set of actionable steps, supplemented by expert advice from a top leadership consultant that helps you get on track to advancement. It’s never too early or too late to start adjusting your alignment. *Managing Up* is your personal manual for building this vital skill so you can begin building your best future.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why learning to follow is a crucial skill.
- To assess yourself and your willingness to manage up.
- Skills to manage both introverts and extroverts.
- Four common workstyle personalities and how to manage them.
- Strategies to identify and manage the top 10 difficult types of bosses.



by Mary Abbajay

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: MANAGING UP

by Mary Abbajay

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Introduction

The number-one reason people quit their jobs is still because of their boss. Year after year, studies show that the most common reason people leave their employer is due to having a bad boss or having a bad relationship with their boss.

Could there really be so many bad bosses out there? Or is it that we just don't know how to deal with difficult bosses? Could it be that we have failed to highlight and teach a far more important strategy — how to manage those who manage us?

While there are thousands of books (and TED talks, conferences, YouTube videos, etc.) on how to lead and manage downward, there is very little out there on a far, far more important skill — how to manage up. In other words, how to be a successful follower.

In America, we love-love-love leaders. We talk incessantly about leadership. We preach it, we teach it, we hit everyone over the head with it. We are obsessed with it. But in the real world, where most of us actually live and work, we need to know how to follow, too.

While we might resist the notion of being a follower, the truth is that the majority of us spend more of our working time following than leading. Even a CEO must be a follower, too. Everybody has a boss.

The real world of work requires close integration of leaders and followers. It requires cooperation and collaboration across hierarchies. It's time for us to learn how to be empowered followers, to take an active role in managing our careers, ourselves, our bosses and our experience.

It's time to learn to manage up. ●

Stop Complaining and Start Winning

Managing Up Is the Key to Your Success

Managing up is not about brownnosing, sucking up or becoming a sycophant. Managing up is about consciously and deliberately developing and maintaining effective relationships with supervisors, bosses and other people above you in the chain of command. It is a deliberate effort to increase cooperation and collaboration in a relationship between individuals who often have different perspectives and uneven power levels.

Managing up is about *you* taking charge of *your* work-place experience. Here's why it's the key to your success.

Your boss matters. Establishing strong, productive working relationships is the single most effective way to accelerate success in any organization.

People are who they are. Your boss isn't going to change who she is or how she operates just because you would prefer her to be different. By understanding what makes them tick, you can adapt strategies to create a more robust relationship. You can't change how they deal with you, but you can change how you deal with them.

Your career matters. It is your career that will suffer if you and your boss have a bad relationship. Your role in the relationship is to provide your boss with results and performance. You must learn the essence of good "followership."

Choice is empowerment. When confronted with any difficult situation, you always have three choices: change the situation, leave the situation or accept and adapt to the situation.



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SUMMARY: MANAGING UP

Time to Man Up

“Man up” is shorthand for managing up. To man up is to take responsibility for your choices, actions and attitudes. It’s about doing what needs to be done while keeping your integrity and values intact.

To successfully man up, one must make a rigorous and honest analysis of the landscape of self and others. It’s a simple three-step process:

- 1. Assess your boss.** Before you begin to manage up, you need to have a good sense of what you are managing up to. What is your boss’s workstyle personality? How does she interact with others? How does your boss like his information? How does she prefer to communicate? What are his priorities? What are her goals? What are his concerns, challenges and pressures? What is her experience? How did she get to where she is? What does she expect from you? What truly matters to her?
- 2. Assess yourself.** Managing up requires being brutally honest with yourself in terms of who you are, what you want and what you need. It’s also about understanding your contribution to the equation. Ask yourself, What is my workstyle personality? How do I like to interact with others? How do I prefer to communicate? What are my priorities and goals? What do I really need to operate at my best? What are my nonnegotiables? In what ways am I compatible with my boss? In what ways am I not? Is my boss really difficult or just difficult for me? What are my workplace strengths? What are my workplace weaknesses? Am I doing the job I was hired to do? Is my job a good fit for me?
- 3. Assess your willingness to man up.** Managing up is about deploying adaptive strategies, so in order to work, you must be willing to adapt. Ask yourself, Do I like/love my job itself? Do I like/love my organization? Do I need this job (financially)? Do I need this job (for experience/career development)? Where am I on the scale of happiness/stress? Where is my boss on the scale of difficulty? What are the politics/organizational culture of my company? Is my boss a unicorn, or is his/her style pretty indicative of the overall management style? Am I willing to make changes to my behavior and/or attitude? Do I even want to try?

Managing up is like putting together a puzzle. Part of it is your boss, part of it is you and the rest of the pieces are the strategies you are willing or not willing to try. ●

Is Your Boss an Innie or an Outie?

One of the first and best things you can do to manage up is to understand whether your boss is an introvert (an Innie) or an extrovert (an Outie) and then adapt your communication and interaction style accordingly.

Extroversion and introversion are core personality preferences that have an impact on two very important workplace elements: source of energy and source of communication style. Building and maintaining a successful working relationship with your boss requires communicating effectively and making sure you are working with their source of energy and not against it.

Introversion and extroversion are personality traits and preferences that are characterized by the following:

- **Source of energy:** Introverts energize from internal stimuli. Extroverts energize from outside stimuli.
- **Direction of energy.** Introverts focus inward. Extroverts focus outward.
- **Response to external stimulation.** Extroverts respond well to higher levels of external stimulation, while introverts prefer less external stimulation.

It’s best to think of introversion and extroversion as a continuum, meaning that everybody has a little of both and nobody is 100 percent of anything all the time.

The Outie boss leans towards extroversion. This means the boss readily shares information; sometimes over-shares information; regularly has team meetings; talks a lot at team meetings; can be long-winded; has an open-door policy (and means it); makes an effort to get to know you; feels warm and friendly; reveals his/her thought process; likes to move to action quickly; doesn’t mind interruptions; and works frequently with others.

The Innie boss leans towards introversion. This means the boss shares minimal information; team meetings are infrequent; listens more than talks at meetings; can seem overly succinct or terse; often works alone with door closed; doesn’t often shoot the breeze; does less relationship building; rarely walks around the office interacting; likes to reflect/process before taking action; is not a huge fan of brainstorming; is less open to interruptions; and you rarely know what they are thinking. ●

Workplace Styles: Assessing Your Boss’s Workstyle Personality

Treat your boss how *he or she* likes to be treated, not necessarily how *you* like to be treated.

SUMMARY: MANAGING UP

To manage up effectively, it's helpful to consider your boss's workstyle personality. Workstyle personality refers to the types of behaviors people tend to use when interacting with others at work. The following four styles are basic workstyle personalities.

The Advancer

Advancers are highly focused on tasks, achieving results and taking action. They are usually less concerned with building warm and fuzzy relationships. They are often perceived as confident, work oriented, efficient and demanding. And they love to be in charge.

Positive traits include being strong, decisive, determined, pragmatic, efficient, objective and businesslike. Potential negative traits including being aggressive, dictatorial, arrogant, insensitive, unbending, dominating and impatient.

Strategies to manage up:

Speed up! Your Advancer Boss is already five steps ahead of you before you even open your mouth. You must move and speak quickly to keep pace and get their attention. Prioritize what you want to say, and get to the point.

Avoid analysis paralysis. Advancers can easily become frustrated or annoyed by lengthy discussions over decisions. They are often willing to overlook minor imperfections in favor of speed, action and impact.

Bring solutions, not problems. When you identify a problem to your Advancer Boss, you must be able to clearly articulate three things: why it is a problem, how it is affecting progress and your idea for a solution.

Don't take it personally. For Advancers, workplace relationships are built through trust and respect, and trust and respect are built by getting stuff done. Their efforts at workplace relationship building are minimal.

The Energizer

Energizers are full of energy, personality and optimism. They are the ultimate "people" people. They are sociable, stimulating, enthusiastic and good at involving and motivating others. They are known for their enthusiasm, humor and risk taking. They are adept at selling their ideas to others.

Positive traits include being enthusiastic, imaginative, extroverted, persuasive, spontaneous and active. Potential negative traits include being superficial, immature, overbearing, impulsive, manipulative, unrealistic and undisciplined.

Strategies to manage up:

Build the relationship. Energizer Bosses are people-focused. Their currency in the workplace is relationships, so take the time to build one. It's time consuming but worth it.

Think fast, move fast. Energizers are fast moving and fast talking. Try your best to keep up.

Don't be an eeyore. If you are always pointing out the problems with ideas right off the bat, the Energizer Boss will quickly get frustrated with you. Even when faced with tough projects, try to be upbeat and optimistic.

Plan and execute. The Energizer Boss loves nothing more than people who can take ideas off his plate and bring them to fruition. The person who can take ideas, put a plan in place and execute that plan is the perfect yin to his yang. You will be recognized for your efforts.

Be creative. The Energizer Boss wants you to bring ideas and solutions, not problems. Stay on the lookout for potential areas for improvement, come up with a few possible ways to move forward, and then bring those ideas to the table.

The Evaluator

Evaluators prize quality, precision and accuracy. They tend to be organized and want all the facts (and history) before taking action or making a decision. Their preferred approach is to minimize risk by looking at all the options before making a decision. They are the quintessential "measure twice, cut once" type. Positive traits include being detailed, factual, logical, systematic, precise, questioning and quality oriented. Potential negative traits include being critical, negative, dogmatic, nitpicking, isolated and inflexible.

Strategies to manage up:

Be prepared. If you are passionate about a particular aspect of your work or you want to inject some creativity into a project, you need to do your homework before unloading all of your ideas on your boss. Without details and facts, your boss is going to be skeptical of anything new and dismiss it for lack of factual support.

Raise your standards. You probably already work very hard and want to produce quality work. Your Evaluator Boss likely has even higher standards. They are perfectionists, after all! Try your best to focus your energy on just a few projects at a time, and pay close attention to detail.

Focus on the facts. Remember that your Evaluator Boss uses data, not feelings or impulses, to make decisions. If you can show your boss that your request makes logical, rational sense, he is more willing to agree with you.

Impress with detail. While some bosses (like Advancers and Energizers) are easily bored with details, Evaluators thrive on them. Make sure you have command of the details and are prepared to demonstrate this knowledge at a moment's notice.

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Manage your emotions. If you have a disagreement with your boss, give him details and facts to support your position in a calm, neutral way.

The Harmonizer

Harmonizers value people, relationships, stability and harmony. For harmonizers, the workplace climate is very important. They want to help people be successful and happy. Their favored approach is to get consensus and to mediate between disparate opinions because they believe that the best solution is one where everyone is “on board.” Positive traits include being friendly, cooperative, loyal, diplomatic, understanding, helpful and agreeable. Potential negative traits include being soft, indecisive, gullible, too laid-back, cowardly and weak.

Strategies to manage up:

Focus on the team. Your boss is happiest when the team is working well together, and everyone is getting along. Do your part to establish and maintain harmony. If you have a conflict with someone, try to work directly with that person to resolve it.

Think about safety. Do you have a laundry list of ideas that go nowhere with your Harmonizer Boss? Try reframing them in terms of how a change could enhance safety or stability for you, your team or your customers. Your boss is focused on adhering to guidelines and keeping everyone safe (and happy).

Slow down. Harmonizer Bosses are often methodical people. If you barrage them with all your ideas at once or jump from one suggestion to the next, they will feel overwhelmed and shut down. Introduce one idea at a time and provide plenty of detail, steps to accomplish the task and how you will collaborate with others.

Find a mentor. Look for a mentor who is in the next stage of your career and has a different workstyle from your boss. This may be someone in a different department or a different company. It will help you rely less on your boss for professional development and can help you gain leadership skills that your boss may lack. ●

Difficult Bosses

If you stay in the workforce long enough, at some point you are going to experience a difficult boss. While this is unfortunate, it doesn't have to be the end of the world or a roadblock in your career. Learning to manage a difficult boss means being able to adopt a strategic perspective. It requires you to work a little harder, reflect a little more and make conscious choices.

Here are the top 10 difficult bosses you are likely to encounter in today's workforce:

- Micromanagers
- Ghosts
- Impulsives
- Narcissists
- Pushovers
- Best Friends
- Workaholics
- Incompetents
- Seagulls and Nitpickers
- The Truly Terrible: Psychos, Tyrants and Bullies

As you read through the following strategies, keep in mind the following perspectives:

Appreciate the opportunity and embrace the challenge; you will learn and grow more from a difficult boss than you ever will from a great or easy boss. The most important thing you will learn is what kind of leader you want to be when it is your turn.

Rather than label your boss a difficult person, try to identify the difficult behavior or behaviors. This will help you break down the problem into smaller, more manageable bits.

Assume positive intent. More often than not, many difficult boss behaviors result from a lack of self-awareness, a lack of emotional intelligence or a lack of basic managerial know-how, rather than from an evil intent.

All human behavior stems from some inner drive, want or need. The more you can figure out what the inner driver is, the better you can align your strategy to meet that need.

Finally, one of the most important questions you must ask yourself is, “Can I live with this behavior?” Do you want to make it work? Stay in a place of choice, because a place of choice is an empowered place.

1. The Micromanager

Nobody likes to be micromanaged. Having someone draped over your shoulder, constantly scrutinizing your every move is frustrating and soul crushing. Human beings have an innate neuropsychological need for some level of autonomy, so a boss who denies you this can be very difficult on both an emotional level and a workplace engagement level. Micromanagers who dictate and control your every move prevent you from exercising independent thought, creative problem solving and risk taking — all things that lead to growth.

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Strategies to manage up:

Do not resist. Instead, dig in and manage up. Stop being surprised by this behavior. The truth about overcoming this managerial dysfunction is that it requires you to do more in the short run in order to gain more in the long run.

Develop trust. Much of micromanaging is based on fear, so you must develop trust with your boss. Your boss must trust your judgment, your ability to meet her goals and expectations, and your ability to consistently deliver quality work.

Deliver high-quality work every time. Double- and triple-check everything you do before giving it to your boss. Learn what markers of quality your boss wants/needs and her preferences.

2. The Hands-Off, Absentee, Ghost Boss

There are several types of hands-off bosses and many reasons why they ghost. The hands-off boss takes pride in being a macro-manager by delegating and empowering. The too-busy boss may want to provide guidance and support but can't seem to carve out the time. The apathetic boss not only doesn't show up, he doesn't really care. The technical expert is the boss who has the time but not the inclination to manage you

Strategies to manage up:

Do your job. It sounds simplistic, but it can be easy to veer off course when someone isn't supervising or guiding you. As tempting as it may be, resist the urge to pick and choose your work or take long lunches every day.

Build strong team relationships. Do everything you can to support the team and encourage strong team relationships and communication. You can turn yourselves into a self-directed team, which is a team that effectively combines their different skills and talents to work without the usual managerial supervision toward a common purpose or goal.

Find a mentor. Build other mentoring and coaching relationships in your organization and industry. Not only will this help you grow professionally, but it will also help you build a network of resources to help you solve problems and find answers.

3. The Narcissist

One of the most dreaded and difficult bosses to deal with is the Narcissist. Narcissist Bosses have an exaggerated sense of their importance and their entitlement. They care more about their success and self-promotion than they do about the organization or their people. They have an unrelenting need for admiration, praise and ego-stroking. They are quick to take credit for everything

and even quicker to place blame on others. The Narcissist is incapable of self-reflection or acknowledging failures.

Thriving under a Narcissist is difficult, which means surviving a Narcissist is often the best option.

Strategies to manage up:

Assess the upside. Is it worth it? Many Narcissists have built huge empires and have blazed trails in new industries. If you are able to navigate the difficulties of the Narcissist Boss, there may be positive payoffs in terms of career success, experience and professional connections.

Protect your self-esteem. When working for a Narcissist, it is important that you don't take her behavior personally. Narcissists' demeaning and demanding behavior is who they are. Do whatever you can to compartmentalize their behavior. Protect your soul.

Get out. Narcissism, like any other personality trait, is a spectrum. Mild or even medium-level narcissism might be manageable. But if you find yourself working for an extreme Narcissist, the best advice is to get out.

4. The Impulsive Boss

Most human beings are wired to seek stability, certainty and homeostasis, so working for a boss who creates chaos and uncertainty can be very challenging. There are multiple reasons that your boss may be impulsive. Some are easily bored, some love change, some are desperately trying to make their mark and some are just incapable of sustained focus.

Strategies to manage up:

Appreciate the intention, and reshape the energy. Impulsive Bosses are often trying to make a positive impact. They probably want to do good and meaningful things; they just may not know how. Try to think of this behavior as a positive energy force that you have to learn to reshape into something useful.

Be open-minded. Don't become so resistant or annoyed by working for an Impulsive Boss that you close yourself off to innovation and good ideas. If your boss has a track record of impulsiveness leading to some successes, then your best strategy may be to buckle up and go along for the ride.

Recap and keep track. Shifting direction is what Impulsive Bosses do best, so they have a tendency to lose track of decisions, priorities, projects and goals. Take responsibility for recapping conversations, project announcements, priorities, assignments, etc. Put them in writing. Recapping helps to focus, clarify and confirm. It also provides cover.

5. The Pushover

Pushover Bosses' inability to take a stand or to have the courage of their convictions can be extremely detrimental to organizational productivity and positivity. Pushovers can't stick to a decision. They allow employees to walk all over them, and they never have your back. Because the Pushover rarely holds employees accountable, the ones who suffer the most are the high-performers, who quickly become frustrated with the lack of direction and the refusal to hold low-performing employees accountable.

Strategies to manage up:

Get to know them. Knowing their history, experience and personality will help you determine how best to navigate them. If they lack confidence because they are new managers, be sure to encourage and support them when they make good decisions. If they are insecure because they are new to the organization, help them understand how things work at your company.

Seek constructive feedback elsewhere. The Pushover is not going to give you any useful or constructive feedback. Look to other high-performing colleagues or mentors to help with your professional growth and development.

Fill the vacuum. A Pushover Boss leaves a power vacuum. Look for ways to fill it (using your powers for good, of course). Take some calculated risks. Look for opportunities to make decisions. Look for ways to proactively solve organizational problems and fill needs.

6. The BFF Boss

There is a big difference between being *friendly* with your boss and being *friends* with your boss. Remember that your boss is your boss first and your friend second. He doesn't love you unconditionally — as a friend would. He loves you conditionally — as long as you perform and give him what he wants or needs.

Strategies to manage up:

Be friendly but not best friends. It's a fine line that you'll have to walk with the boss who wants to be BFFs. You *do* want to engage in friendly conversation and show interest in her life. While getting to know your boss as a person (and vice versa) will help build trust, never forget that it's a slippery slope.

Get busy. While you should accept the occasional invitation to socialize with your boss, you want to limit this so as to avoid crossing the threshold from friendly to BFF. If your boss constantly asks you to go to lunch, have coffee, do happy hour, hang out or talk on the weekends, then you need to get busy with other commitments, real or imagined. Decline with kindness.

Mind the social media. Be careful about including your boss in your social media outlets. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and the like are potential career land mines. Weigh the pros and cons carefully before accepting the invitation from your boss to follow your feed. Or better yet, let your boss know that you would prefer to connect with him on LinkedIn.

7. The Workaholic

Workaholic Bosses are everywhere. They "live to work" and often expect (and usually) favor those who share their appetite and zeal for this "all-in" work mentality. This "live to work" mentality can be exhilarating and exciting. However, working for a Workaholic can be extremely stressful, overly consuming and downright damaging to your physical, mental and emotional health.

Strategies to manage up:

Isolate the issue. Is it the pace of the workload? The amount of work on your plate? The level of incessant urgency? The number of hours required or expected? Whatever it is, make sure you are clear about where you are struggling.

Align your boundaries with their expectations. It's okay to set boundaries with your Workaholic Boss. Don't be passive-aggressive. Verbalize your needs while still expressing dedication to the job and a desire to meet your boss's expectations.

Decide what you really want and act accordingly. The bottom line is that if you want work-life balance or if you are a live-to-work person, then don't expect to succeed in an organization, profession or industry where workaholism is the path to success. Choose a profession, organization or industry that better suits your life plan.

8. The Incompetent

Organizations love to promote people for technical skills instead of managerial skills. This often creates problems when the technical expert turns out to be a totally incompetent manager. The incompetent boss avoids decisions, prefers inaction, makes bad choices, passes the work and hires the wrong people.

Strategies to manage up:

Diagnose the disorder. Is your boss an Incompetent or a Fraud? Incompetents are often good people who just lack the skills or sensibilities needed for success. Frauds talk their way into positions for which they are not qualified. Try to figure out which one you are working for as it will help you decide if you want to manage up.

SUMMARY: MANAGING UP

Check yourself. Before labeling your boss an Incompetent, take a good look to make sure your judgment is sound and not coming from jealousy, spite or ignorance.

Show them the way. If you suspect that your Incompetent just lacks the experience or confidence, then show her the way. Instead of approaching your boss with disdain and derision, approach with compassion.

Step up, compensate and cover. Become your boss's best asset. Offer to take more responsibility and projects.

9. The Nitpickers and Seagulls

Nitpickers love to, well, nitpick. Nothing is ever perfect enough. They dive into the most miniscule details. Instead of praising (or even acknowledging) the good parts of your work, they focus on the one error they find.

Strategies to manage up:

Learn what they like. In order to please Nitpickers, you need to learn what pleases them. Pay attention to what they nitpick over. Learn their style and preferences. Don't guess. Ask.

Seagulls swoop, and there are actually two types of Seagulls: poopers and poachers. The pooper Seagulls are those who swoop in at the last minute (or at the first sign of trouble), poop on everything and then swoop out. They make lots of noise, create a big mess and leave it to the team to clean up. The second type of Seagull, the poacher, is the boss who assigns you a project and then, when you are almost done, swoops in and poaches it for herself.

Anticipate the swoop. If you have a Seagull Boss, don't let the swoop surprise you. If your boss is a poacher, then pay attention to the types of projects she likes to poach. There is usually a pattern. The more you can anticipate the swoop, the less jarring it will be when it happens.

10. The Truly Terrible — Psycho Crazy Bully Tyrannical Screaming Egomaniacs

The Truly Terrible are everywhere. These are the bosses who are not just difficult to deal with but are truly psycho, crazy, bullying, tyrannical, screaming egomaniacs. These are the bosses who use dominance, power and control to lead. These are the bosses who are emotional (and sometimes physical) abusers. These are the bosses who are unyielding control freaks, blamers, manipulators and tyrants. They thrive on intimidating, bullying, humiliating and browbeating their staff.

No one can work for a psycho, crazy, bully, tyrannical, screaming, egomaniac boss long term and thrive. The following strategies are designed to give you time to look for a better (or just different) job.

Strategies to manage up:

Protect your psyche. This is probably the most important thing you can do. At the beginning of every day, imagine you are putting on a golden shield or force field around your soul. This golden shield needs to keep you from internalizing the behaviors and impact. Visualize your force field or shield blocking your boss's poison arrows. It sounds flaky, but it really works.

Plan your exit. You should start planning your exit as soon as possible. Get your résumé updated. Activate your network. Search out other opportunities both within and outside your organization.

Document everything. It's important to keep a paper trail of your boss's abuse, in case you do decide to go to HR or seek legal recourse.

It's Okay to Quit

While sticking things out is a noble and often useful tenet, there are times when quitting is and should be the best course of action.

Signs it's time to quit include, you wake up miserable every day and dread going to work; you feel unsafe at work; your stress level is permeating your entire life; you've tried to make it work, and nothing makes it work.

Once you make the decision to quit, Get your ducks in a row — get your personal belongings together, gather any company equipment and know what they owe you. Give proper notice, and do not burn bridges. Be as professional and respectful as possible, and be gracious in the exit interview.

Managing up is good for you, good for your boss and good for the organization as a whole. Mastering this rare skill can mean the difference between surviving and truly thriving in your career. ●

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Webinar: *Good Boss, Bad Boss* by Robert I. Sutton. In this Soundview Live event, Dr. Sutton applies his common-sense approach to show how the great bosses in our world differ from those who are just so-so or, worse yet, downright inept.