

## How to Know if You Have a Good Boss

Is your boss more like: Michael Scott (*The Office*)? Donald Trump (*The Apprentice*)? Lou Grant (*The Mary Tyler Moore show*)? Jack Donaghy (*30 Rock*)? Dr. Kelso (*Scrubs*)? Mr. Burns (*The Simpsons*)? Gordon Gekko (*Wall Street*)? Or maybe Captain Kirk, Gordon Ramsey, George Steinbrenner, Don Vito Corleone, Dr. Cuddy or Dr. House?

What makes a good boss? If you are lucky enough to have a boss that has even some of the following characteristics you should be thankful. If you've found someone with all 20 characteristics you have been extraordinarily lucky or skilled in taking a position. If you're a manager, how many of the following skills or traits do you possess? How many are you working to improve?

### 20 Common Characteristics of Good Bosses (There are many more.)

1. **She listens. She really listens.**

When you enter her office with a question or concern she stops what she's doing, stops reading emails, makes eye contact, and thoughtfully considers what you are saying. She also remembers what you have said from one day to the next. She wants your opinions and acts upon them.

2. **He's present.**

He doesn't come in late, take long lunches, leave early, and his whereabouts are known throughout the day. He's available and works harder than his people. He doesn't hide when there is a crisis.

3. **She understands your day-to-day routine.**

She has a good understanding of your basic duties and challenges and so is better able to make decisions that affect your job. Managers who lack such understanding request the undoable or create unneeded stress.

4. **He's more interested in making you successful than making himself look good.**

A manager who focuses more on this team, rather than on looking good to upper management gains the trust and respect of his people. Morale sinks if a boss's focus is on self promotion or he caves to top management's demands solely to protect his position. A good boss gives you as much credit (or maybe more) than you deserve.

5. **She's comfortable acknowledging she doesn't know.**

She's at ease asking questions and relying on others for input. She's not afraid of people as smart as she is. She's also able to apologize when it's appropriate.

6. **He shares.**

He shares information thoroughly and timely so that you can do your job and feel a part of the organization. There's no hoarding of information and significant effort is made in communicating, even though it takes time and energy. He shares his time too.

**7. She doesn't throw you under a bus.**

A good boss creates a climate where mistakes can be tolerated, employees won't be publicly humiliated for poor decisions, or blamed for her mistakes. You know she has your back, even when you're not present. No scapegoats.

**8. He decides.**

He is not afraid to make decisions, even the tough ones that people don't like. Those who avoid making hard decisions or can't say no create serious problems downstream.

**9. She looks for problems.**

Good bosses don't avoid problems they look for them and meet them head on. They're addressed quickly. They have the courage to deal with problem employees. There's no "let's hope it goes away."

**10. He notices.**

He notices your efforts, successes, and frustrations. He takes the time to provide regular, meaningful and specific feedback. He uses positive reinforcement frequently (when it's deserved and matters).

**11. She tells the truth.**

Good bosses are honest and don't just tell employees what they want to hear. They discuss poor performance, company problems, and other difficult issues clearly and without "dancing."

**12. He coaches and develops.**

He takes the time and puts forth the energy to help employees do their jobs better by setting high standards, taking time to teach, using employee mistakes as chances to grow, and encouraging employees to do better and better. He's not threatened by growing his staff and he's respectful of you and your time.

**13. She has high ethics and fights for what's right.**

She supports employees on the significant issues that matter and can be trusted and counted on to be fair and professional.

**14. He sets clear expectations.**

He takes the time to plan well and communicate properly so that employees know what is expected of them. Details and timeframes are made clear so that no one is set up to fail. He's also not afraid to change course as necessary.

**15. She keeps stuff interesting.**

While many of us really do like our jobs, let's face it, a lot of work can be boring, tedious, or just plain "work." A good boss makes work "less work-like" by challenging employees, providing various opportunities for growth, making them feel a part of the organization, and that they make a difference. After all, we do spend 8 hours a day with each other.

**16. He celebrates.**

He celebrates the successes of the individual, the team, and the organization. Sometimes they're small successes, sometimes they're huge. Celebration brings increased morale, commitment, and a spirit of teamwork.

**17. She has a sense of humor.**

A manager who can laugh and who can make people laugh is a tremendous asset in the workplace. Work can be serious and stressful. Laughter is an important ingredient to successful management.

**18. He's smart, has common sense, and has the emotional intelligence to use both well.**

Being intelligent is obviously a critical management skill. But without the maturity and emotional intelligence to use it wisely and with humility, it can actually be a negative force.

**19. She gets things done and makes things happen.**

People want to work in atmospheres where things are accomplished, the team is moving forward, and goals achieved. A good boss facilitates and drives these.

**20. He remembers they're people.**

While work should be an employee's first priority while on the job, a manager who understands that employees are people with lives is a keeper. Knowing something about your people not only seems like the "human" thing to do it also makes management more effective as you can tailor your managing to the individual.

And, if you are fortunate to have a good or great boss, thank or acknowledge him or her. Bosses need positive feedback too.

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