

q work: **BAD HABITS & SOLUTIONS**

The 7 bad habits that drive your boss crazy & how to turn them around

We've all worked for one, or perhaps you are working for one now - the boss who makes your working life day hell. Perhaps you judged them to be ineffective, unethical, power-hungry, a perfectionist, a micro-managing control freak, or some other not so lovely adjective. They may be all that and more, or perhaps there's more to it.

When situations at work aren't working, it could be that you are in the wrong role or that your boss or organisation isn't bringing out the best in you. It could also be that your work habits are less than ideal, and are impacting your productivity and working relationships. It's almost impossible to assess a situation accurately if you don't first understand the part you are playing in what's happening. Ask yourself: Are you really bringing your best self to work every day?

Let's find out.

1. Are you always late?

When you keep people waiting you are effectively saying, 'My time is more important than yours', unconsciously implying that you regard yourself as more important. When you miss deadlines, you show yourself to be unreliable and difficult to work with. Be clear on deadlines and prioritise your workday to get the most important things done first.

2. Are you a meeting junkie?

When you rush from meeting to meeting or event to event, you can get to the end of the day exhausted yet having achieved little on your to-do list. Structuring your day and including time for breaks will help elevate your productivity and keep you focused and alert.

3. Are you setting the bar too high?

We are often told we need to set goals, but not just any goals - BIG GOALS. Yet research shows that setting goals that are too high and too hard often inhibits progress. You are far more likely to make sustained progress when you break your work down into bite-size, manageable chunks.

4. Do you avoid saying 'no'?

There's nothing worse than feeling like you are drowning in work and yet are unappreciated as more and more comes your way. It's easy to say 'yes' when a request comes in, yet there will be times when you need to say 'no'. Jointly set priorities with your boss, agree on the boundaries around workload, and how you will respond to work requests outside standard working hours.

5. Are you the office energy thief?

An energy thief saps you of energy, drains your focus, wastes your time and can throw you off track as they continuously focus on the negative, seeking to drag others down with them. They expect people to do things for them, demanding attention and support, yet are not prepared to offer the same support to others. Being seen as political, a gossip or an energy thief will do nothing to endear you to your boss or work colleagues.

6. Are you firing on all cylinders?

Downtime and holidays are essential for your mental health and wellbeing. As well, if you frequently burn the candle at both ends - working late, taking work home and always working weekends - you will eventually burn out. When you aren't in good shape, your work suffers, as does your ability to handle stressful and demanding situations. It's essential to find time for you.

7. Are you getting enough sleep?

Many people are chronically sleep-deprived. It's easy to sacrifice sleep when you're busy and juggling priorities. However, it is a crucial ingredient for successful working relationships. Dealing with work pressure is easier when you are well-rested. You'll also be better equipped to step into courageous conversations with your boss, manage a heavy workload and make well-reasoned decisions.

How many of these habits are you sometimes, or often, guilty of? Poor habits can strain working relationships and ultimately stretch them to breaking point. To be your best at work, you have to be prepared to dig deep into how you think you are and how you actually are. That's hard, and it can hurt. However, it is the only way to improve. After doing this, you may find that the shift you need to make is only small, or it may be large. But now you know where you stand, and with that self-awareness you can start making the changes necessary to progress.

Michelle Gibbings is a workplace expert, working with global leaders to build workplaces where leaders and employees thrive and great things happen. She is the author of 'Step Up: How to Build Your Influence at Work', 'Career Leap: How to Reinvent and Liberate your Career' and the new book 'Bad Boss: What to do if you work for one, manage one or are one'.

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