

## THIS IS THE BOOK BOSSES DON'T WANT YOU TO READ!

WHO'S AFRAID OF THE  
BIG, BAD BOSS?



How to Survive 13 Types of  
Dysfunctional, Disrespectful,  
Dishonest Little Dictators

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### PREGNANT AND PASSED OVER

*...I've been the acting manager in this job for six months, since my former boss left. I know I've been doing a good job because I've gotten two letters of commendation from the heads of [other] departments since I took over. Last Friday, my boss announced that he hired a new guy to take my place as the permanent manager of the department and I'm going back to my old job. I have a masters degree... This new guy has ten years more experience than I do, but he never went to college and he's never managed a department...*

*Two weeks ago, I announced that I'm pregnant. I'll be going on maternity leave in four and half months. I think that's why he passed me over for this promotion...*

*Everyone in the department keeps coming up to me telling me how sorry they are that I didn't get the job and how unfair it is. I get angrier every day and I can't talk to my boss because I'm afraid I'll blow up and I want to handle this professionally. I'm thinking about quitting...*

Dear Mother-to-Be,

You may have been taken advantage of, especially since you are being removed from a job you were doing well. You have a good reason to be angry, but don't quit--yet.

You didn't say much about your history with this boss, so I don't know whether he's a bad boss--one who behaves badly routinely and intentionally--or he's a boss who did this one thing badly. If you enjoyed your work environment before this incident, it might be worth seeking a settlement rather than starting over somewhere else. If you want to try to settle, consider options 1 and 2 below. If you're sure you want to resign, read option 3.

#### 1. If you want to try to settle:

Talk with a trusted friend or family member until your anger subsides. When you feel able to maintain your composure, meet with your boss. Do not discuss your pregnancy; it's irrelevant to your job performance. Ask:

*"Why am I being removed from the 'acting manager' role rather than being promoted into it?"*

Stay focused on your performance. Do not discuss the new person who is being hired into that role, even if your boss brings up the subject. Then ask:

*"What could I have done differently that would have resulted in my being promoted?"*

Do not argue any of your boss's answers. Just write them down. If your boss asks why you are taking notes, say that you are going to include them in your developmental goals and you don't want to forget what he said. Thank him for his time.

On your own time, at home, write a rebuttal to the answers you disagree with. Put your written rebuttal away for a week, then, read it back to yourself. Make sure it does not sound angry and it does stay focused on facts. When it's done, present your case to your boss's boss and ask for a promotion. Write down everything your boss's boss tells you. Your boss's boss will probably inform you that he or she must get back to you. Ask how long you should wait until you follow up. After your follow-up conversation, if you are not offered a promotion or put on a schedule to be promoted, consider option 2.

## 2. If you don't want to talk with your bosses or if you don't like their answers:

Continue to perform your job duties to the best of your ability.

Get a paper copy of any documents that refer to your assignment as "acting manager." These include, but should not be limited to:

- The original announcement of your assignment as "acting manager"
- Letters of commendation
- Memos between you and other managers
- A list of your accomplishments since you've been in this role
- Documents from your boss that compliment your work, no matter how informal

Also write your recollection of the conversation you had with your boss when you were first offered the "acting manager" assignment and list any promises that were made. For example, if were you informed that this was a developmental assignment and you could be promoted to "manager" if you demonstrated your ability to do the job, include that in this document.

Next, contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in your state. Check here for contact information: <http://www.eeoc.gov/offices.html>. Send copies of the records listed above to them and ask if they think your company may have violated an employment law. Here is a quote from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Web site at [http://www.eeoc.gov/abouteeo/overview\\_practices.html](http://www.eeoc.gov/abouteeo/overview_practices.html), as read on 1/31/06:

*"Pregnancy Based Discrimination - Pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions must be treated in the same way as other temporary illnesses or conditions."*

Ask for their advice about how to proceed. They may issue a formal complaint to your employer and help you work out a settlement. They do not charge for their services. (If the EEOC is too busy to handle your case and you are willing to spend your own money, contact an attorney who specializes in employment law.)

### 3. If you're sure you want to resign:

It's almost always better to have another job to go to before you resign. It may be easier to search for another job after the birth of your child and there may be other reasons for staying. One is that you may not be eligible for maternity benefits at another company. Your current company is obligated to pay those benefits, so let it. Return to your company when your leave ends so you won't have to repay any of those benefits. Once you have your child care situation worked out, begin your job search.

Be open to the possibility that you may reconsider your decision to resign when you return. It might be easier to advance in a company where you have already established a reputation. Also, things may have changed to your advantage while you were away and an opportunity for promotion may be available to you soon.