

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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BOSS STEALS & BLAMES EMPLOYEE

...If you're going to tell me to think about how I'm causing this problem with my boss don't even bother and don't tell me to be calm, I need some real help...

...I've been working full time [in retail for almost a year] so I can go to school at night...At first when I saw [my boss] put some things in a bag and walk away, I figured it was something to do with her job. After she did it a few times, I asked her what she did with those [things] because I thought I could learn more about working in retail. She made this awful scrunched-up face like a monster and this awful sound came out of her mouth. She pointed her finger at me and said,

"Look miss smarty pants, if anyone finds out that these [things] are missing I'll say you took them. I'm your boss, so they'll believe me. I'll tell them I was just getting ready to fire your ass for stealing, so if you want to keep your job, school girlie, just shut your trap."...

...Since then, no matter what I do, she tells me it's wrong and to do it over again but I'm doing everything right! She even apologizes to customers for my mistakes when I don't make any mistakes!...I'm stuck because if I tell [her boss] what she's doing or how she's treating me, she'll fire me...My salary pays my tuition and I don't want to quit school...I'm going crazy here...please tell me something I can do to make this work...

Dear Threatened,

You have good reason to be alarmed. You did nothing to cause this problem and there is nothing you could have done to avoid it. You are in the unfortunate position of being used by your boss as her "get-out-of-jail-free" card—if your boss is caught or challenged by anyone in your organization, she'll offer you up as the real problem just to save herself.

There are a few things you need to do. First, find an alternate way of funding your education—that is your highest priority. Look for scholarships first—ask your college advisor for help, search the Internet and find a financial advisor who specializes in locating private scholarships. Second, ask your college registrar to help you apply for a student loan. Begin the application process so you will have a fall-back plan—you don't have to take the loan just because you applied. Do this soon because you could find yourself out of work any day.

Once you have an alternate plan for funding your tuition, start looking for another job. Ask your college advisor if there are co-op opportunities available—jobs that are considered part of your education and for which academic credit is earned. If not, look for a job with an employer that offers tuition assistance—be aware that you may be required to work for 6 months to a year before being eligible for tuition assistance and plan accordingly.

If possible, transfer to another department with your current employer. Do not quit your current job until you find a new one or until your boss tries to fire you—avoid being terminated even if you must quit before you've found another job. While continuing to work at your current job, keep written records of your conversations with your boss. Start with a memo to your boss saying, in your own words, something like this:

"On ___ (fill in the date), you put ___ (list the items) into a bag and removed them from the sales floor. When I asked you what you do with those things, you said, _____ (repeat what she said to you). I asked you about this so I could learn more about the retail business—I was not challenging you. I am still interested in knowing the business reasons for you removing items from the sales floor. You are my boss and I would like to learn from you."

The purpose of this memo is to document the incident so you can protect yourself later. If your boss continues to take things in your presence, write a similar memo each time—make sure that your memos are dated and they list the items that were taken. Keep paper copies of your memos in a safe place away from your work location. Remember, this is only temporary until you find another job. It will show your boss that you're not going to accept being taken advantage of and another benefit is that she may stop mistreating you.

While all this is going on, write your resignation letter but do not submit it; keep it with you so you'll be prepared if your boss tries to fire you—don't date the resignation letter until you actually submit it. The purpose of doing this is so you can resign rather than be fired. If your boss tries to fire you, attach a copy of your memos to your resignation letter and give it to her; also send a copy of the letter and memos to a Human Resources manager.

Before your graduate from college, read *The Ultimate Bad Boss Survival Strategy* in Chapter 14 of *Who's Afraid of the Big, Bad Boss?* This section tells you everything you need to know to survive all kinds of bad bosses throughout your entire career.

Best of luck to you.