

# I Was A HORRIBLE Boss — But Here Are The 10 Things I Learned From It

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**This will help you understand your AWFUL boss.**

I fired eight people in eight years of owning my business. In the scheme of owning a company, it's normal to have people quit. And while I've spent most

of my adult life working for myself, I know that getting fired is a rare occurrence. So why did I cut people loose so easily?

In short, I was a horrible boss. Either I expected too much, or I imposed unrealistic deadlines. Or I hired the wrong people and then spent their tenure regretting it.

I wasn't a great boss, and most of that comes from having no management training, but I also learned that part of my missteps came from unresolved emotional issues of my own. Even though I've never been fired, I had this notion that employment is a tenuous tightrope of making nice and doing stellar work.

**I've come to learn that hiring is like any other relationship: if you want it to last, you have to have compassion, be in it for the long haul, and stick around when times get tough.**

My own insecurities about not being good enough or not being liked colored my view of others. All my life I'd been told I was bossy and had a big mouth, which I took to mean I wasn't lovable. I never quite trusted that friends and [lovers](#) were with me because they wanted to be; I kept waiting for them to leave. I felt the same way about my staff, which may be why I let employees go [before they could walk out](#) on me.

I have a team these days and I've hired well. I [love](#) working with them, and even better, they love working for me. I've learned a lot by being a horrible boss, most importantly perhaps that being a good boss is an art unto itself. But I've also learned the following:

**1. Being a good boss isn't something you're born with.**

Just because we do a job well doesn't mean we're primed for management. Leadership training is precious.

**2. Not everyone is meant to lead.**

While my public speaking and writing inspire, managing isn't my wheelhouse. And that's OK.

### **3. Owning a huge business isn't for me.**

I want to do good work in manageable chunks. In our society of *grow grow grow*, it takes courage to shrink a company and to start loving the work again. I decided to shrink my business and resume working from home because I like the work but have no desire to spend my days managing others.

### **4. Communication skills are a learned art.**

Even people in communications professions may not interact one-on-one so smoothly. And they're the last people to realize they're bad communicators.

### **5. Great leadership comes from seeing the other person as yourself.**

I projected what I wanted and what I feared onto my employees. I wish I had looked at them as living, breathing individuals with goals and dreams, but I was too caught up in my own frailties to see.

### **6. Don't hire friends.**

For that matter, don't hire people who haven't worked in years. Most of the women I hired had been home with kids, taking odd jobs to earn extra income. They didn't need to work and they didn't want to work too hard. To build a team, you have to be all in — all of you.

### **7. Just because you know someone doesn't mean you should work together.**

Yes, you can be sure they won't steal or burn down your house, but that doesn't mean you'll work together well. In fact, they're less likely to take you seriously as a boss because they know you personally. And you probably won't stay friends.

### **8. Business is business.**

It's not personal. Not everyone knows this. If a piece of writing needs editing, or campaign results are disappointing, it doesn't mean the person who worked on it is less of a person. Successful people maintain a thick skin. I have a

strong personality and prefer direct communication. I say it like it is. In business, it's not personal, and if I like things a certain way, that's all it is.

### **9. Don't take it personally when someone quits.**

Even if they cite YOU as the reason. There are plenty of bitch bosses people [stay with for years](#).

### **10. You get what you pay for.**

Whether it was a low hourly wage or a low salary, I was more worried about paying bills and paying myself than offering competitive wages. Quality people can, and should, be selective. And companies need to pay for talent.

**The mistakes we make lead us to the people we're destined to become. These days, I take a deep breath and see in the person across the table the same fragile soul that burns within me, which makes me the best boss I can possibly be.**

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