

## **DTD Episode 12: Defeat Your Drama! I love my job but my boss is a tyrant! What can I do?**

In the Defeat Your Drama segments I will provide solutions based on the information provided. I will obviously not have full details so will provide customized strategies based on what you share. Always consider your own specific circumstances before taking any action. These are suggestions not guarantees.

If you'd like me to share customized strategies for your drama situation go to my website <http://podcast.defeatthedrama.com/defeat-your-drama/> . You can type or record your message. Use your real name or an alias for anonymity. Note that recorded or written messages may be used on the podcast.

Sarah from Oregon

I love my job! I know that I am making a difference. I have a lot of autonomy. My coworkers are great! We work well as a team. The drama happens when my boss comes to our location. He works in a different office about 150 miles away so I don't see him that often, maybe once every couple of months. When I do, though, he blows in and is a complete tyrant. He treats me like I'm doing a terrible job and berates me in front of co-workers. It's awful!! Most if not all of the stuff he yells at me about isn't even true! He makes all of these assumptions and doesn't give me a chance to provide the truth.

I feel like quitting every time he visits. I don't want to leave my job. What can I do?

Let's Defeat Your Drama Sarah!

I am so sorry that you are having this experience. Yuck!



The first thing you say is that you love your job. So, let's see if we can make it palatable enough for you to stay with full energy and focus.

As always, we need to start by determining what is in your control. Where can you have a positive impact on the situation? Keep in mind, I am not excusing your boss's behavior. But, you can't control how your boss is reacting. You can only control you.

I have 3 specific strategies to try:

### **#1 Focus on the Message Not the Method**

Look beyond the **way** he is communicating and hear what he is saying. Is there any validity to the concerns he is expressing? Sometimes when someone is speaking aggressively we focus fully on how they are communicating and miss out on any nuggets that are there. If we are missing nuggets of valid information, at times, this can cause a person to get even more aggressive. Again, not saying it's okay or that you are to blame. It's just what can happen. If that is the case, this might be an area where you can create a positive impact.

If there are some valid concerns there try to address those. Sometimes the request they are asking for isn't the actual fix. So, you also want to hear the message and then think about whether the fix requires doing the right things OR, is the fix communicating better. In other words, you're doing the right things but your boss doesn't know.

This is a distinct possibility since he spends most of his time 150 miles away from you. Is he aware of all that you are accomplishing and all that it takes to do what you do?

I have my clients ask themselves – Is this a doing issue or a communication issue?

Often the actual issue boils down to communication. A boss just isn't aware of the thought and research going into a decision or the steps taken to complete a project with accuracy. They then, inaccurately assume that the work is not right.

If you are doing the right things but he is not aware, come up with a new communication strategy that will keep him in the loop with more detail. If you are up to it, ask for his input. Let him know that you'd like to keep him up to date on your activities and ask what he feels is the best method; weekly phone call, email Excel Spreadsheet on your intranet or Google Docs.

You didn't share the kind of work you are doing so I'm not sure how much information you would need to share.

## **#2 Make a Request:**

I use the term "request" purposefully. Request is very non-confrontational. And that's the feel you want to have in this second step. Think about what you need from your boss. And then lob it out there. Making a request doesn't have a lot of emotional oomph. Just ask and don't hold tight to a specific outcome. The goal is for your boss to feel like he has complete freedom to respond to your request or not. He actually has freedom regardless of HOW you ask, but if you can ask from a non-emotional place I believe your chances of success are higher. If you ask defensively an already aggressive person will meet you there and be defensive themselves. They'll want to hold their position.

You don't share what your general response is when your boss gets aggressive. I don't know if you are walking out of the room, yelling back, defending yourself.

Schedule a time to talk to him separate from any outbursts. Share that you sense his frustration with you. Communicate that you want to understand what you can do to help him feel more confident in you. Share that you'd prefer feedback in private. Indicate that you are hoping that the increased updates from you will help him stay informed of your progress, achievements, etc..... If it feels comfortable and the relationship isn't too adversarial aside from the outbursts, share what it feels like to be on the receiving end of his frustration. Request, calmly that he share his concerns in a way that helps you excel. Share that you love your job and want to do well. You are open to constructive feedback.

If you listen or nuggets and respond by doing things differently or upping your communication about accomplishments and this doesn't fix the problem and your requests to have a more productive communication with him fall on deaf ears then the last resort is

### **#3 Give the Issue Little Focus:**

If your boss has no self awareness and, thus, is unwilling to even consider changing his communication style then what is left to your control is your reaction to his outbursts.

Can you aim little of your focus there? Try not to think or worry about it in between outbursts. Focus, instead on the enjoyment you get from the work that you do. I'm not saying it is easy, but choose a reaction or non-reaction. Maybe his outbursts are ridiculously funny. Maybe it's sad for him. Wow, to hold so much anger. Or to have the need to tear others down to help himself feel better.....You don't really know for sure why he is doing what he does, so why not tell yourself a story that doesn't include you at the center. It really may have nothing to do with how he actually feels about your performance on the job. He might even feel intimidated by your accomplishments and potential.

Again, I'm not saying the behavior is okay – but there are ways to make the situation more palatable. Try these steps to see if you can find more enjoyment, or perhaps make a change in you that transforms the situation. Are you able to get to a place where you just ride out the storm?

It can't hurt to try! These strategies may help you stay, happily, in a job you love!

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