

# How To Deal *With An* Insecure *Boss*

BY PHIL COOKE



***Early in my career, I had a string of insecure bosses. Guys that would steal your ideas and take credit, criticize you in front of others, and do anything to make themselves look good. So I learned survival techniques early on. Perhaps that's why 10 years ago this commentary by Jeanne Sahadi connected with me. If you're trapped in a situation with an insecure boss, this might help transform your outlook:***

*Everybody's got their insecurities. But some folks are ruled by theirs. When your boss is one of them, his insecurities will rule your day ... and your career prospects. "Insecurity is one of the most common causes of managers behaving oddly," said Shaun Belding*

### Handle with Care: Insecure Bosses

Dealing with one is like playing catch with a knife. You never know when you're going to get cut.

By Jeanne Sahadi, CNNMoney.com senior writer

NEW YORK (CNNMoney.com) — Everybody's got their insecurities. But some folks are ruled by theirs. When your boss is one of them, his insecurities will rule your day ... and your career prospects. "Insecurity is one of the most common causes of managers behaving oddly," said Shaun Belding, author of "Winning With the Boss From Hell." "You're never quite sure what to expect from them." Well, maybe there is one thing: They'll do anything to make themselves feel better, even if it's at your expense.

**Your best-case scenario:** you manage to become a trusted ally because you learn to contort your actions and comments to soothe el jefe's quivering sense of self.

**Your worst-case scenario:** You're perceived as a threat no matter what you do and you get fired. That happened to one woman I know whose considerable marketing talents, popularity with colleagues and ability to communicate well with top management drove her direct manager up a tree.

The manager would schedule meetings on days she knew her charge wouldn't be there, let her employee do what she did best but then take credit for her work, and eventually convinced new management to oust her, despite the fact that she over-delivered on her numbers and was a top performer. "You felt the manager always wanted to throw you under the bus at every turn," the fired woman said.

A friend's acquaintance had a similar experience. He had a boss at a start-up who used his football-player brawn to intimidate and book knowledge to paper over his lack of real-world experience. The manager reassigned him to three new markets to sell the company's services despite the fact that the boss couldn't explain why he thought those markets could be money-makers for the company. When asked, he told his employee, "That's an unfair question." Then later he told him to figure out the potential for himself. "He was trying to make me unsuccessful and inherit my pipeline deals so he could get credit for making the sales," my friend's acquaintance said. Even the nice ones can be nightmares

Of course, not all insecure bosses are so obvious or spiteful. But even the nicest of them can kill productivity and morale and push good employees out the door, said Rich Wellins, senior vice president of human-resource consulting firm Development Dimensions International. Driven by fear, envy or just serious self-doubt, a boss's insecurities can manifest as:

**Micromanaging:** Bosses who are perfectionists, terrified of making a mistake, or terrified of losing their jobs will meddle, clogging up work flow.

**Indecisiveness:** Some bosses shy away from making the tough decisions — particularly when it comes to getting rid of poor performers. That can drag down an otherwise strong team and garners the boss a reputation for being ineffective.

**Hide and seek:** The insecure boss isn't able to give a team a sense of purpose, tends not to be very visible with employees or customers and often hunkers down in his office.

**Inability to give direction:** You do what the guy once said he wanted, and now it turns out he wanted you to do something else. Worse, he wanted you to figure out that he wanted you to do something else and is angry that you haven't.

**Overcompensating:** Insecurity can be disguised by bullying, arrogance or power-mongering. Putting the pin back in the grenade since you can't choose your bosses, chances are good you'll end up working for a few during your career. The absolute worst way to deal with them is to take credit for your successes without acknowledging them, or make your managers feel stupid in front of others by correcting them or questioning their decisions.

But if you want to make the best of the situation, Belding and Wellins said, you might:

*\* Recognize that when your boss is indulging his insecurities at your expense — say, screaming at you — that it's not necessarily about you.*

*\* Acknowledge your manager's contributions — everyone likes recognition, especially insecure people.*

*\* Let your boss know that you love your job and want to have a strong working relationship with her, and ask what you can do to make it better.*

*\* Suggest ways to do things that will make your manager look like a hero. If your every move makes the boss look good, he just may become insecure about losing you.*

# Is It Time for Christians to Suck it Up?

BY PHIL COOKE

I've been reading with some amusement about the "outrage" from Christians over the recent Saturday Night Live satire of the movie "God's Not Dead 2". Sure there's a few cringe moments that sting, but let me offer a different thought about the sketch: Consider that for something to get on Saturday Night Live's national stage means that it's made a significant dent in the culture. For a movie to get parodied on that show means it broke through and captured a wide audience. After all, SNL doesn't joke about issues their viewers haven't heard anything about.

God's Not Dead 2 suffers from issues that most sequels suffer from ("Hey, the first movie made a lot of money so quick – let's come up with a follow up.") It wouldn't necessarily have been my personal answer to the cultural issue it highlights, but it was a box office success. And rather than complain that SNL is making fun of the film, I'm thrilled that the movie generated such a buzz that SNL felt they needed to respond.

The bottom line is this: If Christians get so offended at every little slight, what do we possibly have to offer the world? If we have so little backbone when the going gets tough, why in the world would anyone seek our help when they experience times of trouble?

You don't have to go far to read about Christians in other countries who are experiencing real persecution. Mothers being raped in front of their husbands and children. Fathers executed in front of their families. Beheadings. Rape has become a weapon of war in the ISIS effort to stamp out any trace of Christianity in the Middle East.

But in the United States, Christians are outraged when we're made fun of in a comedy show. It's no wonder the culture doesn't see much reason to listen to our message or seek us out when times get tough.

Certainly our rights as Christians in this country are being infringed on a regular basis, and every day, Christians face a culture that's growing more and more hostile. And this isn't to criticize those on the front lines of those very real battles. But whining about every little slight doesn't help. In fact, it just emboldens the critics to keep pushing.

How about this: Instead of whining and complaining, what if we started doing such remarkable things in the culture that the world would be forced to re-think who we are and who the God is we serve? Throughout the New Testament book of Mark, people were astonished because Jesus' teaching "had authority."

*Jesus didn't have time to complain. He was trying to change the world.*