

5 tips to connecting with your manager

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Is this your current situation: For a while you find yourself disconnected from your manager. Deadlines are under pressure, the virtual world is blurring the relationship and you find yourself questioning if this is what you want to do for the rest of your life.



The reality is that you do not have a choice - the income is desperately needed, and you know the company needs your commitment and input during these troubled times.

Right now, the only option is to get to the core of the disconnect and make it work, but what can you do to re-connect with your manager so that they can advocate when you are not there to speak up for yourself?

One of the ways to improve our communications skills is to understand that there are four different internal representation systems: visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, and auditory digital. Everyone communicates with all four, but operates with the preferred system, hence, we have different ways of communicating and telling our messages to the world.

Thus, if we communicate visually and someone else communicates with another preferred system, the lines will be crossed and small naggy frustrations will come to the fore.

Yes, emotions, the environment, insecurities, and titles influence the way you react, communicate and perceive life, and when you become aware of these influences, you can start to change your approach and mindset.

My experience in the corporate world has taught me that *any* disconnect began with miscommunication and not having a

clearly aligned vision.

What do you do, if you need to get your manager back on your side of the ring? Here are my (proven) tips on getting the two of you on the same page again.

1. Have an open yet frank conversation with your manager

You are probably thinking: “But, you do not know my manager”. To re-connect and get down to the core of the underlying issues, it must start with open communication.

Taking into consideration what type of manager you have, be sensitive towards the timing of the request as well as when you will have this session.

Face-to-face is always the first prize, but if online or virtual is the only option, ensure that you can have the conversation in private and that you would not have any interruptions.

Park the emotions. In a workplace setting, you mustn't speak from an emotional point of view, but rather from facts. For example, instead of saying: ‘I am feeling you are ignoring me and don't use my suggestions’, change it to, ‘I have noticed my suggestions on the last two projects were put on the back burner, how would you like me to address future suggestions and input to ensure it is of value?’

This way you immediately open the conversation with your manager. If they have an expectation for you to step up, they can air it now. Use this opportunity to re-align their expectations of what you need to do.

2. Don't accumulate an army

The biggest mistake you can do is to create an army of supporters of how unfair or unreasonable your manager is.

The workplace should not be a battlefield, but rather a playing field of an A-team practising to be the best, not only on the field but also off the field.

By saying this, practising is hard, sometimes even painful, but when you withstand the resistance, the perseverance pays off.

If you use it as a battlefield and spread a negative vibe in the working environment and exaggerate the emotional turmoil within yourselves, you not only jeopardise possible transfers, promotions, and solving the relationship, but you also affect the overall performance of the company.

Always remember, the issue is between you and your manager - not your colleagues and the manager. Keep it private.

3. Ditch the mentality of being a victim

Take the responsibility of your actions upon yourself, confidently step up, and do what you need to do, within your job specification.

The fact that you feel that your manager doesn't advocate for you isn't necessarily all your fault, but taking ownership and being responsible for your actions puts you in a better position to state your case and improve the relationship.

Victims expect lenience, are self-righteous, and are looking for excuses. Victors step up, take responsibility, suggest solutions and find amicable ways to work with each other.

4. Show compassion

Managers are humans just like all of us.

Don't tolerate obnoxious, disrespectful, rude behaviour, but be mindful of what is currently happening in their life and that could affect the way they have managed you the last few days or weeks – and influenced the way they advocate for you.

Just for a moment, it might be an opportunity to show that you could lead and ease the pressure for them and at the right time, they will notice it and appreciate it. You too can manage your manager.

5. Face reality, if all else fails, move on

I have found so many clients that were holding on to a job, trying so hard for their managers to 'like' them to no avail. Why?

Their core values were not in alignment, expectations were worlds apart and their original reasons for accepting these positions were out of desperation, against their core values and a dream of becoming something in which the timing wasn't right.

Your current position and the challenging relationship with your manager is not worth sacrificing your peace of mind, your core values, personal growth, and mental health.

Face the reality and be true to yourself. Update your CV, plan the next six months and take action to start working towards a better future relationship – for yourself and your manager.

When you have reached this point, it is up to you, to recognise not only your strengths within the company but accept the weakness and improve on them sooner rather than later.

Your manager and any other position have a shelf life within a company - you can either build a valuable product together or move around until you find the right warranty that fits your core values and alignment. You are in control of your life. Decide what you want to do, and step up.

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