

# YOUR BOSS HAS NO POWER OVER YOU

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Hello there, my friends. It's great to have you back this week. This week, we're talking about bosses again. I know it's something that a lot of people have a hard time with, managing that relationship with their boss. Having a really effective positive relationship with your boss actually makes your job easier, not harder. And the boss relationship is a tough one for a lot of people.

Last week, I talked about how being a boss doesn't necessarily make you a great leader. So if you missed that one, you should go back and listen to that podcast as well. That one combined with this one is going to give you a lot of insight into how to make some very simple changes to improve the relationship with your boss. It's something that I think is really important for you to understand. That is the idea, the concept that your boss actually has no power over you.

They have no power over you and you're baked into the idea that they're your boss so they actually have power over you. But no, that's not true. Your boss has authority over the team. They make decisions, they give assignments, they set the direction or they convey the direction of the organization to the team, and they ensure the team is focused on that direction, and they deliver the results. Meaning, they ensure the team delivers the results based on the goals of the organization.

So they have some authority over the team but that's not the same as having power over you. Their authority over the team, that part of it is what you signed up for. Unless you own the company outright, you are going to be answering to somebody. You've already signed up to be in some sort of formal hierarchical structure where someone else is setting the direction or making the decision to set the direction based on input. Your job is to add value to that direction to execute against that direction, based on your experience and your skills.

You signed up for the fact that somebody is going to have authority over the direction that you take as part of being part of a team. Even though a lot of people sign up for that, they still fight against it, anyway. But let me save you some time and tell you that fighting over that structure or trying to control that structure is just a waste of your time because you can't control it. It's already there. Trying to work around it or bypass it or whatever, is honestly not the best use of your time. You're not going to get the best return on your effort.

Instead, I invite you to take all of that amazing energy that you are investing, let's say, in fighting against this hierarchical structure, fighting against your boss's authority. Take all of that amazing energy and I want you to

consider investing it in something else. What I'm offering you is to stop thinking your boss has power over you. I'm inviting you to invest all of your energy in learning to stop thinking your boss has power over you. You might be like, *I'm not really sure what you mean by that*. That's okay, I'm going to lay it out for you.

How do you know if you're giving your power away to your boss? The number one way you can tell is if you are blaming your boss for how you feel about anything. Are you blaming your boss for how much you enjoy your work? Are you blaming your boss for how you feel about your boss? Are you blaming your boss for how you feel about your job in general? Are you giving your boss all the credit for loving your job? The number one way you can tell if you're giving your boss your power is if you're saying things like, *My boss makes me mad*. What you're saying is your boss has power over your emotions.

If you're saying things like, *my boss doesn't know what they're doing, or my boss is making my life miserable, or I used to like my job, but now I hate it because of my boss. My boss doesn't like me*. All of those thoughts that you're having, if you're thinking things like that, and you're spending a lot of time or ruminating on stuff like that, then you're giving all of your power to your boss.

I'm going to give you the bottom line upfront here. The reason you aren't happy with your boss is because of the way you think about your boss. If you think your boss makes you mad, if you think they don't know what they're doing, if you think that you used to like your job, but now you hate it or that they don't like you and it's because of your boss; those thoughts are the things that are driving your experience with your boss. The reason you aren't happy or you're not enjoying this experience with your boss is because of these thoughts that you're generating around your boss.

It actually has nothing to do with your boss. Your boss is over there doing their thing, good or bad, whatever. Everyone's got a different opinion on how your boss is showing up and doing their job. Including you and your opinion of your boss in every aspect will color your relationship with your boss, The reality is, that your boss is a circumstance.

If you've been listening to me for a while, then I talk a lot about the model. Your boss is a circumstance. They are the C-line of the model. If you haven't heard me talk about this before, I'll do a quick overview now. The model is made up of two things, The things you can't control and the things you can control. The things you cannot control are circumstances. Circumstances are indisputable facts, no opinion is allowed.

An example of an indisputable fact is, *I have a boss and her name is Sue*. That's a fact. If you had a boss, and her name was Sue, that would be a circumstance. You could prove that, there's no opinion on that. If you said, *My boss, Sue is making my life miserable*. That's not a fact. That's your opinion. Or you could say, *My boss is great at her job*. Also not a fact, but also your opinion. And somebody will say, *It's not just me. Everybody thinks Sue is great*. But that's not necessarily true, either.

If you peel that back a little bit, you'll realize that everyone may have a slightly different description of what great means to them, what parts of Sue are great, and what parts of Sue would need adjustment for that particular person.

So whenever you start to add descriptive words, or adjectives or anything, usually, that's an indicator that you're adding your opinion. Circumstances are totally just indisputable facts, and strict circumstances include three

things. They include other people, they include the past, and they include random events. So other people, of course, are your boss. You cannot control your boss. Other people include your spouse, your kids, and all of these people. You can't control random people on the street and people who cut you off in traffic on the way to work. You cannot control them, They don't like it. Just like you don't like to be controlled.

Even if you're in a position of power, even if you're the boss, you don't really control other people. You get to tell them what to do. You tell them what their objectives are. And if you are a really 'controlling' boss, you might tell them all the steps to take. But the more you try and control people, the more they rebel. You get bad feedback from them, they quit you, they vote you out of office, you get voted off the island, or whatever it is.

People don't like to be controlled. And eventually, if you try and control them, they'll stop it. You'll get in a fight with your husband or get in a fight with your kids. The more you try to control people, the more they don't like it, and they're going to let you know. It's not worth your time, anyway, because you can't control them. It never works.

The other thing you can't control is the past. It's in the past, it's done. You can spend all your time thinking about it and trying to rewrite it in your head, what will you say next time, and all the things. But it's in the past, you can't change it. Even something your boss said, even if this morning your boss said something like *This work isn't good enough*. That becomes a circumstance when it is in the past. You could actually quote your boss and say the circumstances. My boss said, *Your work isn't good enough*. That's the past.

Then there are random events; just random things that happen that are out of your control. You could have taken a job and then there was a structural shift in the organization. Maybe you are moved to a different department, your boss changes, or someone gets promoted. These are all things that are out of your control. They are random. Maybe there's bad weather and you're late for a meeting because you got stuck in traffic. Random, can't control those things. No matter how much we try and control those things, we can't.

It's unfortunate because most of the time, a lot of people spend their time trying to control circumstances. They try to control their people, they try to control all the moving pieces at the office, they play politics, and they try to rewrite the past. You see that a lot in politics. People spend a lot of their time trying to control things that are really outside of their control. And that includes your boss. Your boss is a circumstance.

Now, there are things you do control. I personally think you control all the good stuff. You control what you think about things. You control what you make things mean to you, which means that if I say something or your boss says something, you control what you make what your boss says mean to you. You control what you think drives your feelings, and from those feelings, what actions are created from there. These are all things you control. You control what you think, which drives what you feel, which creates some actions, that ultimately create your results. You're in control of all of that. Your boss cannot control what you think. Your boss cannot control what you feel.

We like to blame people for how we think and feel because it's easier than taking accountability for it. We might think something based on what someone said, but we're still choosing to think it. They didn't create that thought. And the more that we blame others, and give other people credit, and accountability for how we show up, the more we're giving our power away. Because we can't control other people, we're saying, *I'm at the whim of how*

*my boss behaves*. Who wants that? You are not at the whim of how your boss behaves. You own all of that. And the minute you take that back, that is the minute that you take your power back.

Let's take a situation, just a very simple situation. It happens all the time. I'm going to show you how two different thoughts that you have could play out. Let's say your boss sends you a text and the text says, *Sorry, I can't make the meeting today. Please reschedule*. Very simple text, very straightforward, and doesn't have any tone in it. We don't know, we can't tell from the text. But it's very straightforward. *Sorry, I can't make the meeting today. Please reschedule*.

Depending on who you are, your thoughts could be, *They don't make me a priority*. Maybe your boss has canceled a lot of meetings with you and you're taking it personally. So when they send you this text saying, *Sorry, I can't make the meeting today. Please reschedule*; your thought is, *They don't make me a priority*. And when you think they don't make you a priority, you feel disrespected. And when you feel disrespected, you're going to take some action from that place.

Now, some people are going to complain to their co-workers, complain to their husbands, or their spouses. You might tell yourself, *Oh, the boss sucks*. You can't work like this and you might actually go to your team and present it like, *You know what, Sue's canceled the meeting. She doesn't think this is important*. Or you might not even say that, but your demeanor might say, *Sorry, guys. We're not having the meeting today*. You're just having it. You're just presenting the information in a really defeated way.

When you act like that, the result you're going to have could be lots of different things. But as an example, the result you're creating for yourself is that you just don't feel like a priority. The result is you don't feel like a priority. Your thought was that, *They don't make me a priority*. And your result is that you don't feel like a priority. Your result could also be that you don't make your boss a priority. You don't try to understand your boss and what's on their plate. Your result could also be, *You know what, I just found more evidence here that my boss doesn't actually respect me*. These are all things.

Your brain loves a circle. It loves a loop so it has this thought that from the simple text, *My boss isn't making me a priority*, it generates these feelings and actions to actually create a result that creates evidence that your boss isn't making you a priority. So that you can believe you're thinking right and stay in this thought loop.

The very same situation. Boss Sue sends the text, *Sorry, I can't make the meeting today. Please reschedule*. And the same situation, maybe they've done that a few times. Thought could simply be, *Oh, I need to reschedule. She can't make it. She can't make it. I need to reschedule*. The feeling that's created by that thought is very neutral. And the difference between those two thoughts is one thought makes it very personal, and the other thought is just very functional – I need to reschedule.

I'm not saying you always have to have a functional thought, you might think a lot of different things. Yay. You could think, *That's awesome. I wasn't ready, anyway*. You could think of lots of different things. But in this case, and in this example, I want to play out here, this person thinks, *Okay, I need to reschedule*, and the feeling they have from that is very neutral. The action they take is they reschedule the meeting. And they don't think about it again, they don't even worry about it anymore, and they go on with their life.

Those are the actions that they're taking. The result that they get is that they're investing their energy in other places and other things. The result is they don't take it personally. So just in these examples alone, you can see that the way you're thinking about your boss will drive how you handle that situation. You are creating your own little vortex of thoughts and feelings around the relationship with your boss and it's all based on your thinking. And anytime you want, you can change how you're thinking.

Let me tell you a story. This is not about a boss, this is about my husband, but it's all about relationships. The story is about how my husband was annoying me. My husband has this thing, this habit where he likes to tell the same story over and over again, particularly, stories where someone has 'wronged' him in some way. He feels wronged. We've been together for 20 years so let's say an average of four times a year. He told me this story again and I got annoyed. I was so annoyed and frustrated. I'm like, *I know this story. Why can't you just let it go?*

This is me with my husband. I'm being very critical and my actions were that I told him that I didn't want to hear about it again. I gave him some unsolicited advice to just get over it. I didn't take it seriously. I was not compassionate about it. I was not empathetic at all. And the result was, let's just say I felt annoyed and I was mad. At the end of the day, I was mad at my husband.

I was talking to a coach friend of mine who said to me, *Why are you giving all of your power to Paul?* I was like, even as coaches, sometimes it's really hard to have sightlines into yourself. That's why it's great to be coached because coaches hold up mirrors and say, *This is how you're behaving. Is this how you really want to behave?* I realized at that moment, that Paul actually isn't annoying. I chose to think that Paul was annoying. I created that experience for myself. I could have gone 100 different ways for that.

I could have thought, *Here's the story again. I wonder why he's telling me that.* He's telling me this story for a reason. I need to understand why. There are lots of places I could have gone for that. But I went to *he's annoying.* And I created this experience for myself, where I was rude and not compassionate and not my best self, like the opposite of what I recommend to people to treat their employees. I was not my best self with my husband. And I realized, no, he's fine. He's not annoying at all. I'm creating the feeling of annoyance, I'm creating my experience.

He doesn't feel a thing. He doesn't feel annoyed. He doesn't feel mad, except now that I've said this, he's created his own experience of reacting to my reaction. But before that, he was fine. I was the one creating that feeling of annoyance in my body, which I chose to do, unintentionally, but I still chose to do it. So if you apply that situation that I had with my husband to your boss, when was the last time that you were annoyed with your boss? What was the thought that you were having? That created that feeling of being annoyed with your boss because if you were annoyed with your boss, it was because of a thought that you had.

The question I always ask myself when I catch myself in a situation where I feel a strong emotion and a very reactive emotion, I always ask myself, *What am I making this mean? My boss told me to move the meeting and I'm feeling a very powerful reaction here. What am I making it mean that my boss asked me to move the meeting?* And from there, you can answer that question. Your brain loves to answer questions like that. Ask yourself the question and answer it. What are you making it mean? Do you really want to make it mean that? Are you okay with making it mean that? Why are you choosing to make it mean that? What else could you make it mean? Just really stop and be aware of it, and then make a decision with your brain.

There are different parts of our brain. Our baby brain, as I call it, or your lower brain, your cerebellum, that part of your brain sends urges. It just sends these reactive urges. It sends these urges for your consideration. And if you are acting unconsciously, or just reacting to whatever situation, you're basically letting your baby brain make all the decisions for you. But when these thoughts come forward for consideration, it's your upper brain, or your prefrontal cortex that actually needs to decide or can decide whether we actually want to move forward with this and urge this idea that the lower brain has set forward.

Again when you're acting unconsciously, you're not giving your adult brain, your upper brain the opportunity to make a decision; you're just letting that baby brain go. And your baby brain is like a kid running around with a sharp knife. Do you really want to let your two-year-old kid run around the house with scissors or a Sharpie? Dangerous things are going to happen if you leave a child with scissors unsupervised.

So it's really important that if you want to change your situation, if you want to change these reactions that you're having, then be aware of when you're having them, and then give your adult brain an opportunity to make the decision of whether you want to keep the meaning that's being served up to you by your lower brain, or whether you want to choose something different.

The basic steps here that you need to take in order to stop giving away your power to your boss is number one – awareness. Awareness of what you're thinking. Number two – give your brain a chance to assess the situation. Number three – make a decision, and then number four – repeat. So awareness, assess, choose, repeat. Just do it over and over again. Awareness, assess, choose, repeat.

I find the best way to really get good at this is with journaling. I'm not going to give you a whole diatribe on journaling. I am such a fan of journaling. So much comes out that you didn't know was there. But if you can just go through those four steps, even writing them down, awareness, assess, choose, repeat; that's going to take you so far. It's really going to help you see what's coming up in your head.

Let's do a summary. Your boss has no power over you. Your boss is going to do crap and do whatever they do. You get to decide what you want to make it mean, And you do not have to make it mean things that make you sad or make you miserable or mad or feel insecure. You don't have to make it mean those things, you can make it mean other stuff. Even if you choose to get mad, that's fine. You can choose that. The key is to know that you are accountable for it. Your boss didn't make you mad. Your boss did something and you're choosing to be mad about it. That's a big distinction.

Words really matter here. You are accountable for what you think and feel, not your boss. As always, if this content is speaking to you if it's helping you, and you can do a couple of things, please just rate the podcast and whatever podcast player you're using, I would love to get a rating or feedback from you. Send me an email at [mel@melsavage.com](mailto:mel@melsavage.com) and let me know what you think. Let me know how it's helped you. Let me know what other ideas you have or questions you have or whatever it is that you want to send to me and to help me understand where you're at, based on what I'm sharing with you.

I'm going to talk to you next week. I look forward to connecting with you. And I hope you have a great week. Bye for now.