

Winnipeg Women Magazine – Ask the Experts

My new boss is very critical despite the fact that I have been working for the company for 10 years and know my job well. What can I do?

The inability to manage change is one area that can limit our success or derail our careers; says Brenda Oliver, an authority on the impact of emotions on performance and president of Oliver Leadership Inc. “Something or someone is forcing us out of our comfort zone.” However, change is inevitable, so it’s best to manage it rather than avoid it.”

Before your bad relationship turns worse, consider that:

The criticism may be the result of your behaviour and not your performance. “In many cases, the issue isn’t that the employee doesn’t know how to do her job, but she’s unable to accept feedback or adapt,” says Brenda. “If you find yourself becoming defensive or interrupting your boss when he or she talks, you may be guilty of this.”

Change leads to growth. Even when you’ve acquired long term skill, ability and personal knowledge of the business, without change you are limiting your growth, too. “I recommend you try and embrace the change and look at the situation as an opportunity to learn something new, says Brenda”

Companies are working to meet shareholder expectations, and they put management in place for corporate growth – and typically because they are the best candidate to do the job. “This person was put in place to for a good reason, so be open to his or her new ideas,” says Brenda. “Don’t let preconceived attitudes about the new, and often younger, boss affect your interactions.”

Long term criticism may affect performance. It can become a vicious cycle. On-going criticism from the boss leads to a drop in self-esteem, declining performance, and more criticism. Before you’re let go because of performance issues or you walk away from a company you love, recognize that you can’t control your boss. “But we can change ourselves,” says Brenda. “And in changing ourselves; we can positively affect others. That’s your first step towards peace in the workplace. WW

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