



You and Your Boss: A Contract

Most of us have a boss—regardless of whether we exercise leadership at the strategic or tactical levels of an organization. I have recently heard from leaders who expressed some level of dissatisfaction with their bosses that sounded something like this: “My boss continues to tell me how to do things I already know.” Or, “My boss tends to watch over me, no matter how good I am at my job.”

Maybe it’s time to enter into a contract with your boss. Here are some ideas for increasing the effectiveness of the relationship between you and your boss:

- Make a list of your job responsibilities that you perform exceptionally well—things that you do perfectly, with no supervision. This becomes your **A list**.
- Make a list (be honest with yourself) of the things you need help with from time to time. This becomes your **B list**.
- Make a list of those things you don’t currently perform, but would like to do—a wish list of sorts. This becomes your **W (wish) list**.
- Meet with your boss and cover the lists. Try and reach agreement on your **A, B, and W** lists.

During your meeting with your boss, tell him or her that when you’re working on **A** list responsibilities the best way to get the most out of you is through encouragement (*You can do it!*).

For your **B** list, tell your boss that these responsibilities may require some coaching from him or her. You are quite willing to do them, but you may need some help from time to time. Finally, for your **W** list, ask your boss to look for opportunities for you to succeed in these areas. Hint—you may need to remind him or her about these items.

Form the “contract” with your boss. It should result in more freedom for you and less worry for your boss. Amazingly, followers *can* help leaders become more effective.