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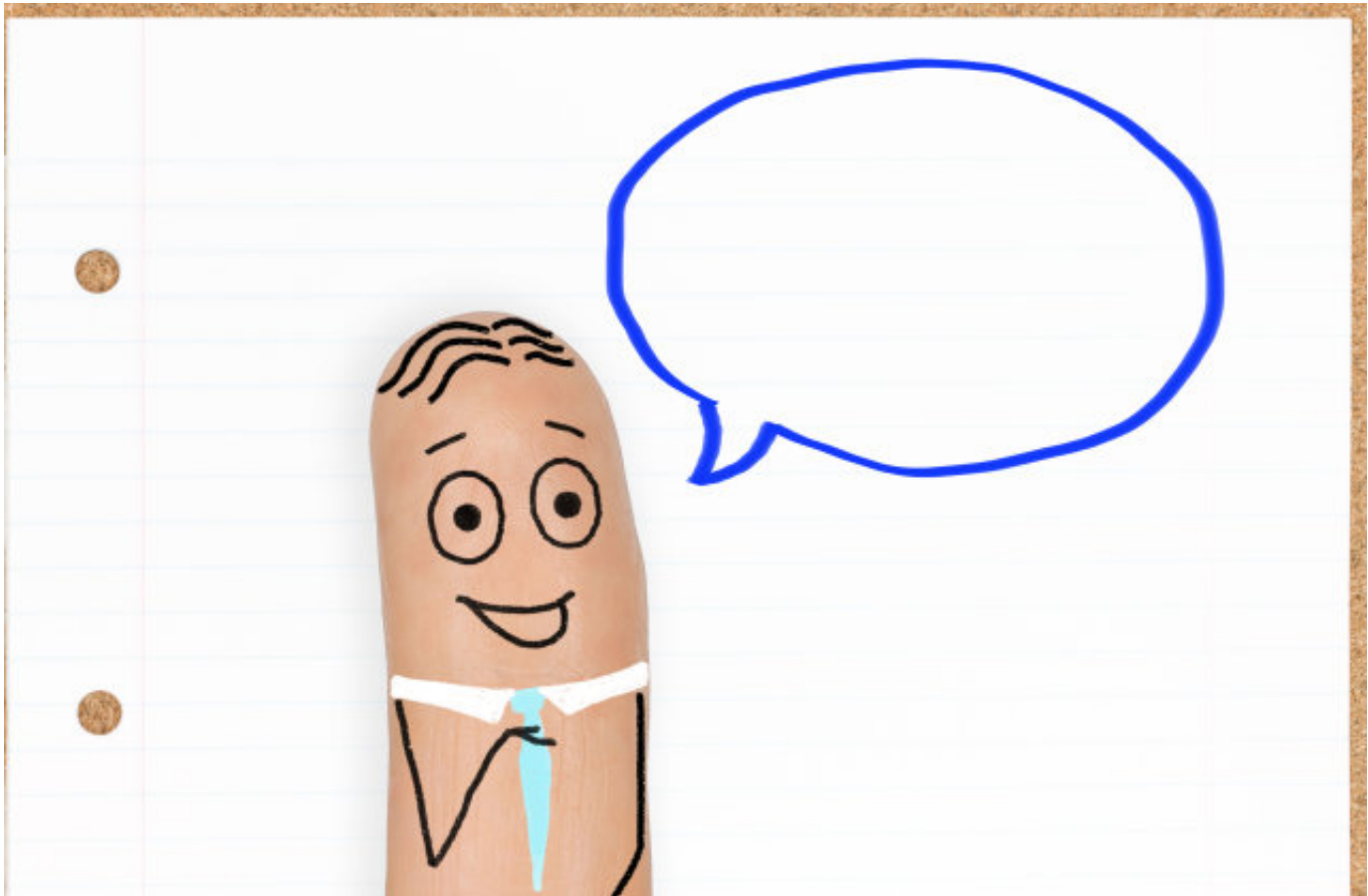


The Perfect Boss-Spea

Gift For Boss's Day: Learn

Use your boss's fav : context when you communicate

John Hoover | Oct 16th 2014



Alamy

Other than the relationship you have with your spouse or grown-up children, the relationship you have with your [boss](#) is arguably the most important adult relationship you have. To varying degrees, your lifestyle, your career, your serenity, and your dog's psychiatric treatments all depend on how successfully you can engender and sustain a quality relationship with the 800-pound gorilla in your life.

If you have a great boss, you have been blessed beyond measure and all the more reason to make his or her life more pleasant. If you are suffering from a [string of horrible bosses](#), remember that the one thing they all have in common is you. Ergo, learning the art and science of boss-speak is a gift that keeps on giving -- to you both.

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Just as nobody ever advanced his or her career by making his or her boss look stupid, people have had precious little success over the centuries trying to force bosses to learn the languages their employees speak. Every successful salesperson knows if you want to make a prospect feel

comfortable and confident enough in your relationship to buy from you, it's essential to learn the prospect's language, not the other way around.

Learning Boss-speak is so simple anyone can do it. Boss-speak is nothing more than adopting the type of familiar vocabulary every husband wants from his wife, every wife wants from her husband, every teacher wants to hear from a student (students often could care less what they hear from teachers). It's what every employee wants to hear from a boss, and what every boss wants to hear from his or her direct reports.

Example: What I know about hockey could fill a thimble about half-way to the top. However, if your boss wears a Chicago Blackhawks game jersey to work on casual Friday, has a hockey stick leaning against the office credenza, uses a puck for a paperweight, has a Muriel Lemieux screen saver on the PC, and is missing a front tooth -- you can bet that woman is a hockey fan -- and I'm going online to learn about hat tricks, icing, and penalty boxes.

If you say, "Hey, Boss, if we jump on the cutting edge of that new technology initiative, we're bound to reap the lion's share of the resources as they become available," your employer with the fractured smile might stare back at you like a deer in the headlights.

But, if you say, "Hey, Boss, didn't Wayne Gretzky tell us not to skate to where the puck is -- but skate instead to where the puck is going to be?"

Your proposal will get executive endorsement.

Even if your hockey fan boss, female or male, is a colossal moron and misses the meaning of the metaphor, you're talkin' hockey, dad-gum-it, and that's all it takes to get her or his full support. Think I am over-simplifying? For some bosses, perhaps. For most, I think not.

We all prefer to live and work inside our comfort zones rather than be dragged outside to speak a foreign dialect. Familiar context feels comfortable. Bosses are no different. The only difference is that he or she weighs 800 pounds.

So, give the boss (and yourself) a break on Boss's Day.

Use your boss's favorite context and examples when you communicate. The evidence is everywhere you look and in everything you read and hear from your boss. What pictures are hung in the boss's office? What are the boss's hobbies? How does he or she frame examples when he or she speaks or writes? Does your boss engage in football-speak, baseball-speak, tennis-speak, cooking-speak, wife & kids-speak, fishing and/or hunting-speak, ballet-speak, mixed-metaphor-speak? (Punting the cake after the curtain falls on the bass boat.)

Learn Boss-speak; if only for Boss's Day.

Your words and ideas will flow unfiltered and unchallenged into your boss's frontal lobe, regardless of how sound or unsound the idea might be, if and only if you are using your boss's metaphorical language. The boss? She'll feel all warm and fuzzy as she drinks from a straw with her mouth closed.

(Oh, and it wouldn't hurt to try this at home on Honey-dumpling. Your quality of life could change beyond your wildest imagination.)

(Oh, oh. And if you are the victim of a string of horrible bosses, the circle will be broken.)

(Oh, oh, oh. I just happen to have the most terrific boss, Amy Friedman, Founder and CEO of Partners in Human Resources International, who listens and endeavors to learn my metaphorical language. How do you like them apples? Indeed blessed.)



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