



Dealing with Bossy People



Welcome to **the 59th episode** of Golden Talk brought to you by **Iran-Australia Language Institute**. I'm Dr. Alikhani, the creator and organizer of the Golden Talk series. In Golden Talk, we aim to provide our audience with opportunities to notice English in the context of real-life situations and topics, offering them authentic language exposure. We also focus on helping our audience learn to develop their thoughts, take turns in conversations, and enhance their communication skills. Meanwhile, we also feel responsible for raising awareness about topics that impact our lives, encouraging our audience to practice arguing for or against ideas and to develop their critical thinking skills. In this episode, titled "**Dealing with Bossy People**," we're discussing an issue that many of you may have to deal with on a daily basis. Whether at work, in social circles, or within families, encountering bossy people is inevitable. Learning effective strategies to handle such situations is essential for keeping peace, encouraging teamwork, and protecting our freedom. Hope you enjoy the episode.

Ideas in Conversation

Read this conversation between a radio show host and a psychologist about *dealing with bossy people*.

Jeremy: Good morning, everyone! Welcome to today's episode of "Golden Talk," where we dive deep into the psychology of everyday life. I'm your host, Jeremy, and today, we're focusing on ways to deal with people who like to **boss others around**. Joining us is Dr. Jack Levine, a psychologist with extensive experience in **interpersonal relationships**. Welcome, Dr. Levine!

Dr. Levine: Thank you, Jeremy. It's a pleasure to be here and discuss such a **relatable topic**.

Jeremy: Let's dive right in. Dr. Levine, for our listeners who might be wondering, how do you define someone who's bossy, and why do some people act this way?

Dr. Levine: Great question. Bossy behavior typically involves someone trying to **have excessive control over** others in a way that's **intrusive** or even **annoying**. It often stems from a need for control, possibly due to underlying **insecurities** or a lack of confidence in certain situations.

Jeremy: Ah, the classic **control paradox**—trying to control everything because you feel like you control nothing.

Dr. Levine: That's exactly what it is.

Jeremy: Now, quite a few of our listeners might be struggling **in the company of** someone who's bossy, not knowing the exact reason. Could you provide us with some **concrete examples** of bossy behavior in everyday scenarios?

Dr. Levine: Certainly. For instance, in a **workplace setting**, a bossy colleague might constantly **dictate** how tasks should be done, even when it's not their responsibility. Or, in a personal relationship, someone might always insist on making decisions for both parties, from what to eat for dinner to how to spend free time, without considering the other person's preferences.

Jeremy: Insightful examples, Dr. Levine. Now, for those listening, what would you say are some **telltale signs** of a bossy person? How can our audience identify such behaviors in their own interactions?

Dr. Levine: There are several signs to look out for. A bossy person often **interrupts** others, disregards opinions that aren't their own and insists on **having the final say** in most discussions. They might also display a **lack of empathy**, showing little regard for how their actions affect others.

Additionally, they tend to offer **unsolicited advice** (نظر نخواستہ می دہد) OR instructions, assuming they know best in all situations.

Jeremy: The painful, unsolicited advice! Alright, let's take a call. Here's Salina from Shiraz. Salina, you're on the air!

Salina: Hi, Jeremy, Dr. Levine. My mother-in-law **takes** bossiness to **another level!** She really likes to **take charge**, especially when it comes to how I'm raising my kids. She's always telling me what I should do, from how they should eat to how they should behave. I feel like she's always **looking over my shoulder**, and it's making me **second-guess** myself as a parent. It's tough because I want to respect her opinions, but at the same time, I need to make my own choices for my kids. Every time we're together, or the topic of the kids comes up, **I'm on edge**, waiting for her next piece of advice or criticism. I'm really trying to figure out a way to talk to her about this without **causing** more **tension** because I value our relationship and want to **keep things smooth** for the sake of the family. Do you have any advice for me?

Dr. Levine: Thank you, Salina, for sharing your experience. This is a common scenario. It's important to set clear boundaries. You might say, "I appreciate your concern, but my partner and I have decided to approach parenting differently." It's also helpful to have this conversation with your partner to make sure **you stand together on** this issue.

Jeremy: Solid advice, Dr. Levine. Next, we have Sina from Tehran. Sina, what's your situation?

Sina: Hey, I really appreciate you taking the time to listen. So, here's the thing: my boss is **overly controlling** and has this habit of checking every little thing I do. It feels like there's no trust in my ability to **get the job done** on my own. From **double-checking** my reports to **questioning** my methods on projects that I'm fully capable of managing, it's like I'm **under a microscope** all the time. This constant **oversight** is really making me

question my own competence. It's also **taking a toll on** how much I enjoy my job and how happy I feel at work. I'm **at a point where** I dread going into the office, knowing that every move I make will be **scrutinized**.

Dr. Levine: That's a tough one, Sina. Your boss's management style is actually referred to as **micromanagement**, which means controlling every small detail of someone's work. It might be worth requesting a **one-on-one meeting** with your boss to discuss your work style and how you might achieve your best results with a bit more **autonomy** (=freedom). Frame it positively—focus on how *YOU* can contribute more effectively rather than criticizing *THEIR* management style.

Jeremy: Great point, Dr. Levine. It's all about the approach. And **if all else fails**, Sina, consider **seeking advice** from a **trusted colleague** on handling this situation.

Dr. Levine: Certainly. There's always a way to address these situations while **keeping it civil**.

Sina: Thank you for the invaluable advice.

Jeremy: You're most welcome, Sina. So, Dr. Levine, speaking of addressing bossy behavior, what are some of the main steps people should generally take when they **encounter bossy behavior**, especially in a **situation they can't easily escape**, like at work?

Dr. Levine: The key is assertive communication—expressing your needs and boundaries clearly and respectfully. For example, **using "I" statements** to express how you feel without **placing blame**. It might be, "I feel overlooked when my ideas aren't considered during meetings."

Jeremy: Wise words to live by. Dr. Levine, thank you for joining us today and sharing your expertise.

Dr. Levine: My pleasure. Thanks for having me.

Jeremy: And to our listeners, remember, dealing with bossy people is **a test of patience** and communication. **Keep your wits about you**, and maybe, just maybe, try to out-boss them in kindness and assertiveness. Until next time, keep tuning into “Golden Talk.” Stay thoughtful and stay kind.

Useful Language

boss someone around [informal]: To tell someone what to do frequently and with unnecessary authority.

Example: *She always bosses her younger brother around, telling him how to do his chores.*

excessive control [formal]: Exerting more management or influence over a situation or person than is reasonable or healthy.

Example: *His excessive control over every project detail frustrates the team.*

intrusive (adjective) [formal]: Involving an unwelcome or uninvited interference or disturbance.

Example: *Random bag searches of students were seen as intrusive, raising concerns about autonomy and respect.*

dictate [formal]: To give orders or state something with authority.

Example: "The company policy dictates that all employees must wear badges."

have the final say: To make the ultimate decision or have the authority to decide.

Example: *When it comes to choosing our vacation destination, my parents always have the final say.*

unsolicited advice /,ʌn.sə'li:s.i.tɪd/: Advice offered without being asked for, often perceived as unwelcome.

Example: *I received a lot of unsolicited advice about my career from relatives.*

take charge: To assume control or leadership of a situation.

Example: *When the manager was out, Sarah had to take charge of the office.*

look over my shoulder: To worry about someone supervising or monitoring one's actions closely.

Example: *Working with such a strict supervisor makes me feel like I always have to look over my shoulder.*

be on edge [informal]: To feel tense, nervous, or irritable.

Example: *The constant noise from the construction site has everyone in the office on edge.*

oversight [formal]: Supervision or the act of overseeing something.

Example: *The new project will be under the oversight of the engineering team.*

scrutinize: To examine or inspect closely and thoroughly.

Example: *The committee will scrutinize the proposal before making any decisions.*

autonomy: The independence in making one's decisions.

Example: *After years of oversight, the branch office now enjoys a greater level of autonomy.*

keep it civil: To remain polite and respectful, even in a disagreement.

Example: *Everyone, please keep it civil and respect each other's opinions.*

place blame [formal]: To assign responsibility for a fault or wrong.

Example: *After the project failed, everyone started to place blame on each other instead of looking for solutions.*

keep your wits about you: To remain calm and rational, especially in challenging situations.

Example: *In an emergency, it's crucial to keep your wits about you to make the best decisions.*

pushy: Aggressively assertive or forceful.

Example: *She can be quite pushy when she wants something, not taking no for an answer.*

control freak [informal]: Someone who wants to control everything and make all the decisions.

Example: *Our team leader is a bit of a control freak, micromanaging every detail of our projects.*

micromanager: A boss or manager who gives excessive supervision to employees.

Example: *I can't get any work done with this micromanager over my shoulder.*

throw one's weight around [informal]: To use one's power or authority to dominate or bully others.

Example: *Ever since he got promoted, he's been throwing his weight around the office.*

call the shots [informal]: To be in a position to make the decisions.

Example: *In our group, it's always Lisa who calls the shots.*

rule with an iron fist: To control a group or place very strictly or harshly.

Example: *He rules the company with an iron fist, not tolerating any dissent.*

bark orders [informal]: Giving commands in a forceful and often rude manner.

Example: *She's always barking orders, expecting everyone to jump at her command.*

know-it-all [informal]: Someone who acts as though they know everything and dismisses the opinions or suggestions of others.

Example: *He's such a know-it-all. He never listens to anyone else's advice.*

arm-twisting: the action of putting someone under pressure to do something despite their will

Example: *It took a bit of arm twisting, but he finally agreed to do the task the way she wanted.*

heavy-handed: Using too much force or authority in dealing with people.

Example: *The manager's heavy-handed approach to discipline has caused a lot of resentment among the staff.*

Discussion Questions

Read the following discussion questions and think about them.

1. Have you ever had to deal with a bossy person? Can you share your experience?
2. How do you usually react when someone tries to dominate or control you?
3. What do you think are the reasons some people behave in a bossy manner?
4. Can you describe how it feels to be around someone who is overly controlling?
5. How can dealing with a bossy person affect your mood or self-esteem?
6. What strategies have you found effective in managing your relationship with a bossy individual?
7. Do you think there's a difference between being assertive and being bossy? How can you tell?
8. In your opinion, are there any positive aspects of dealing with bossy people? What can they teach us?
9. Have you ever been accused of being bossy? Reflect on that experience and how it made you feel.
10. What advice would you give to someone who struggles to stand up to bossy people?