



How to Be the Best Boss You'll Ever Have

Self-management, time-management, energy-management... Even if you're *not* in the School of Business, it looks like it's all about the management in college! You hear on a daily basis that these skills will be the ones to get you a job after you graduate. While graduation may seem impossibly far away, trust us, it will come up in no time. You want to be sure you've learned how to be your own best employee AND boss. You want to develop self-management skills because realistically nobody wants to hire a worker – or to work *for* – anyone who waits till the day of presentation to prepare for it, or spends two hours of the workday on Facebook. In today's economy, you can (and should) use the time you have in college to gain a competitive edge over hundreds of thousands of other graduates like you, and your personal skills will empower you to do that. They will also bring you a mentality that goes way beyond the success and happiness of having a great job – you will learn to have a great LIFE.

Self-management may sound like a vague skill, but we are going to clear it up with five tips for self-improvement. With each new semester, ASP will add more to your self-management toolkit.

1. **Make specific goals with specific deadlines**

Be very specific with what you want for and from yourself. If you have to write down “I want to finish 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ pages by 7:34P.M. today,” do it. Don't give yourself vague deadlines like “Ehh, maybe I'll get this homework done by the middle of the week.” Unless you are strict with yourself and determined about the time frame, you will put it off till the very end. Come on, we know there are lots and lots of other things to do in college that are way more fun than your homework assignment.

2. **“The fish stinks from the head down”**

There's nothing worse than hating your boss when you're self-employed!

We want you to talk to yourself (in your head, please) in the nicest way possible. To do this, think of it like being a good boss to yourself. Good bosses value your skills, encourage you to grow, recognize successes, and use mistakes as growth opportunities. So, be your own wonderful boss.

3. **The “WOOHOO!” Files**

College is a lot like sports – and you are in for a long race. Stay mentally tough, though, and you will win. One way to get the W is to keep track of your achievements. We like the idea of a “WOOHOO!” file for keeping track. It can be a running list on a Word document or a bunch of folded up post-it notes in a shoebox – it doesn't matter what you use, but here's what you do: If you got an “A” on that crazy paper on something you never thought you'd be able to understand, write it down. Your professor read your essay to the whole class? Write it down. You used a stress management technique to calm yourself down and change up negative thinking during an exam? Write it down. You have to be your own biggest fan and recognize when you did well, even if it's a “small” thing. Put yourself in your personal Hall of Fame because, really, that essay was just epic.

4. **Small steps in the right direction (are better than big steps running to nowhere)**

We know. You have listened to Maroon 5's “Moves like Jagger” and you are going to shoot for the stars. And that's exactly where we want you to be. But you have to be realistic about your goals. Saving \$1,000,000 by the end of the year, for example, is not realistic. Getting a 4.0 GPA, on the other hand, is possible – this one just depends on your choices – and the habits you start forming – now. Set “smaller” and more short-term goals – see our Goal-Setting page for more on this stellar topic.

5. **Time-management's Kryptonite**

So you set your goals, wrote them down, and then you went on Facebook and your life stopped. This sounds easier than it really is, but you have to try to get rid of distractions. If you are able to fully concentrate on your work, you will get it done faster and better – and then that Facebook funtime will be even better when you feel it's well-deserved.