Studies by the Gallup organization show that the No. 1 reason people leave their jobs is because of their boss.

On the flip side, many people can remember a boss who positively impacted their careers and even their lives.

Bosses, whether good or bad, play a critical role in an employee’s life.

So what do people want in a boss? That’s the million dollar question, and you might get a different answer from everyone you ask.

Let’s look at some of the attributes that good bosses have so you can evaluate your own management style related to them.

1. **Competence** – People generally want to follow a boss who knows what he or she is talking about. Demonstrated success in a subject area or specialty helps employees feel they can look to the boss for information and guidance on the job. They can respect the knowledge and skill the boss brings to the table.

2. **Integrity** – A boss with integrity behaves consistently. Employees are evaluated on performance, not on personal preference or friendship. Everyone is held to the same standards. The boss is honest with employees and strives to do the right thing, even when the right thing isn’t popular.

3. **Appreciation** – Good bosses let employees know when they’re doing well. They provide positive feedback and praise to celebrate an employee’s success. They give credit where credit is due, and make sure employees are rewarded for good service. This often means sharing the employee’s success up the line so that the boss’s boss knows how the employees are doing. A good boss never takes credit for someone else’s accomplishments.

4. **Instruction** – A good boss should be able to help employees grow. Employees, particularly those on a career path, often need to learn what the boss knows to be able to move up the ladder. Good bosses share knowledge instead of hoarding it to protect their own positions.

5. **Challenge** – Employees often want to take on new challenges to grow. Good bosses challenge their employees to do so. They provide opportunities for new experiences, stretch goals, and provide guidance on what the employee should strive for. They also allow for the learning curve that is inherent in taking on a new challenge. Good bosses don’t expect perfection on the first exposure. They recognize the benefit of the experience and manage accordingly.
6. **Feedback** – Employees need to know how they are doing if they are going to improve. Good bosses give regular feedback to enhance performance. They don’t wait until review time to point out the failures and lapses of the year. They provide ongoing feedback so employees have the opportunity to learn and correct behaviors along the way.

7. **Accountability** – Believe it or not, good employees want a boss who holds people accountable. They want to know the goal and to know that all employees will be expected to perform their part of the goal. Bosses who let some people slide while holding others accountable are frustrating to employees. The best employees end up doing double duty to make up for the lapses of others. That leads to dissatisfaction. A good boss will make sure that everyone knows what is expected, when it is expected and how it will be evaluated. And then, the boss follows through.

8. **Understanding** – People aren’t machines. They have lives, and sometimes things happen – sickness, family problems and so on. That’s why companies have sick leave, bereavement leave, etc. Employees appreciate a boss who understands and doesn’t try to make them feel guilty for taking allowed time off.

Being a boss is hard work, perhaps the hardest on the planet. Giving employees what they need while accomplishing the company’s goals can be a challenge. But meeting the company’s goals without people would be a bigger challenge.

What kind of boss do you think you are? Are you happy with your self-evaluation? If so, great. If not, start to work on those areas where you feel weakest. Get some training, read some books, observe others who are effective.

We’re all still learning – bosses included!