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I've got a secret to tell you.... Your boss is tired of being your manager. They want you to manage them.

Managing up: How to get what you want & give your boss what they need: Raise your hand if this has ever happened to you:

Boss: Ask me questions any time.

You: Ok I have a question.

Boss: Why can't you try to figure things out on your own??

Very frustrating. But there's a workaround.

Here are my frameworks for managing up:

Most people incorrectly assume increased seniority implies less communication. Ironically the opposite is true. Senior employees are the BEST at communicating & managing up. They proactively communicate to show they've got it handled and prevent endless one off questions. The secret: Let your boss think they are managing you. But in reality, YOU are managing THEM. It's a Jedi mind trick. The more you manage your boss, the more they think you are doing great work.

Three tips to manage your boss:

1. Offer solutions, not problems
2. Make requests, not complaints
3. Keep your boss in the loop

Remember: As much as you can't read your boss' mind, they can't read yours either. Let's dig into each tip:

1. Offer solutions, not problems

- a. We tend to go straight to the issue.
- b. Not: "This won't work because of X."
- c. Instead: "X will make this difficult. But if we do Y, then it has a greater chance of success."
- d. This shows you're proactive and solution-oriented.

2. Make requests, not complaints

- a. You feel burnout creeping on.
- b. Not: "I can't keep doing this. I'm exhausted."
- c. Instead: "A vacation in the next couple months would be great. How do these dates work?"
- d. This implies to your boss that you need a break but in a more positive manner.

3. Keep your boss in the loop

- a. Tactical tip: Agree to an update cadence for each project you're working on--daily or weekly depending on the project's scope.
- b. This way they know you're doing a great job AND they don't need to micromanage.

Managing up effectively has lots of benefits. Your boss:

Believes you're capable

Believes you're worth investing in

Believes you're worth going to bat for

They'll take credit for managing you well. And that's okay.... It's actually good to let your boss take this credit, because they'll feel overwhelmingly positive, warm, and grateful for you.

Translation: Your boss will love you for managing up without knowing you are, in fact, managing them.

Important note: These ideas DO NOT apply to toxic bosses--those who throw you under the bus, gaslight you, and refuse to acknowledge your contributions. Sadly many of us have had to work under leaders like this & the damage can take years to undo.

When your boss loves you, you have options:

Take on more interesting projects

Spar 1:1 and riff on interesting ideas

Room to grow and develop skills in new areas

In short, you get the benefit of the doubt. You have more control over your relationship with your boss than you think. And it all starts with embracing that it's your responsibility to manage your boss.