

Love Affair with the Boss

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Can a love affair with the boss boost your career? In some ways, yes. Business is about relationships, and the closer the relationship the greater the advantage. You have more access to information, and information is often power. You can get favored treatment. You may even acquire a kind of power by association, in that people will be cautious about messing with you. You may get a promotion or a plum sales territory. You've seen it.

Sleeping with the boss can also hurt you. You may not know what a risky game this is. The relationship might not give you the protection you anticipated. The boss may be tougher on you to avoid being charged with favoritism. The boss will also play the love-at-work game and corporate politics the same way. If stomping stompees is a preferred method and take-no-prisoners is a typical strategy, then you can expect similar tough behaviors.

You must consider, too, the resentments among co-workers. You have influence they can't get. People move through the organization in two ways, via power plays or via relationships. Relationships can get bashed and dented over love affairs with bosses, so anticipate a change in them.

You need a taste for power politics if you intend the boss to be a stepping stone to your greatness. Get clear with yourself whether you're up for the rigors of power games. Many people aren't, and you have to be clever, agile, strategic, and thick-skinned to make this work for you. Affairs with the boss remain indelible in the corporate memory, so realize you're becoming part of its cultural history. Love at work is not as simple and pure as we want it to be. Step carefully.