

# Forgiving your boss can increase job satisfaction

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Workers should consider forgiving their boss for mistakes because doing so boosts their own job satisfaction, according to research from the University of Exeter Business School.

The study focused on the relationship between managers and their staff and investigated what happened if those employees were able to forgive their bosses for their transgressions.

"By its very nature, the act of [forgiveness](#) means investing something into that relationship and is a positive, rather than negative act," said Dr. Alison Legood, one of the co-authors of the study. "In the workplace, we discovered that this sort of investment by a member of staff into their relationship with their boss usually leads to more positive interactions between them, which actually makes the member of staff happier.

"Our work also showed that staff who have better quality relationships with their boss in the first place are more likely to forgive."

The positive impact of forgiveness did vary depending upon the seriousness and frequency of a boss's transgressions.

Employees at a company have a limited number of people who they interact with—no matter what level they are at within the business. This makes relationship building and maintenance all the more important.

The research was also carried out by Ana B. Radulovic of Singidunum University, Belgrade, Geoff Thomas of the University of Surrey and Olga Epitropaki of Durham University. They used three studies to test their hypotheses; the first surveyed 254 employees from eight organizations across four countries, the second used an experimental scenario design where participants reacted to a hypothetical [boss](#) and the third was among 262 workers in the United States, who took part in a number of surveys.

The study concluded that in the arena of [relationship](#) building, forgiveness was a positive aspect. Forgiveness also showed a [positive effect](#) on [job satisfaction](#) for [staff](#).

"People aren't perfect and so inevitably things go wrong from time to time," added Dr. Legood. "Since this is the case organizations would do well to adopt forgiveness methods and tools into their training. It is also in their interest to create a workplace culture which encourages forgiveness at all levels as a means of repairing and maintaining relationships." The research, titled "Forgiveness in leader-member exchange relationships: Mediating and moderating mechanisms," is published in the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*.

**More information:** Ana B. Radulovic et al. Forgiveness in leader-member exchange relationships: Mediating and moderating mechanisms, *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* (2019). [DOI: 10.1111/joop.12274](https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12274)

Provided by University of Exeter

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