

Suffering a boss who doesn't suffer fools

Q. I just accepted a midlevel manager job. Yesterday, I met with a senior vice president who I'll have to work with regularly. He said, "I don't suffer fools gladly." I interpreted that as arrogant, especially given his pompous tone. How do you cope with fools like this?

A. Hang on a sec. You meet a guy once and you're flinging all kinds of judgment words around ("arrogant," "pompous," "fool"). You're an excellent name-caller! Seriously, withhold your verdict at least until your third or fourth meeting. He made the wrong first impression, but don't relegate him to the dungeon for good. Some of the colleagues who rubbed me the wrong way at first wound up becoming great friends and allies, and that's only because I tried to see the good in them and—when I didn't—I maintained my neutrality.