

Let's be clear about this . . . !

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Q: I've recently been promoted to a temporary position to fill in for someone on a six month leave. Despite several conversations with my boss, I'm just not clear on the tasks and responsibilities involved. I'm now resigned to try and figure it out on my own, even though it feels like I'm bungling it up. Can you offer some advice on how to tackle this?

A: I applaud your determination to move forward in spite of your difficulties – you're probably more aware of your bungling than anyone else. Communication break-downs mean information isn't passed on; processes are stalled, and people become ineffective and inefficient. People's personal perception impacts what and how they communicate, so be curious about what's getting in the way of some common understanding between you and your boss - don't give up on your quest for clarity.

You say you're not sure how to do your new job. While true, I imagine your career has provided you with many experiences that have shaped how you are at work. For example, you might be the kind of person who is known for getting the job done (doing), who also has earned a reputation for behaving professionally and meticulously (being). There are two elements at play here: doing and being.

Proven, effective communication starts with knowing and managing your own behavior - being. Emotional Learning author Jim Harris' model; BE, DO, HAVE might be worth exploring. Let behaviors – BE, guide how you DO, to HAVE what you want. You already have an existing relationship with your boss, so regardless of the position, think about what he or she expects of you in terms of your behavior and make that your focus. Be persistent and clear in your communication - the do and the have will follow.

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