

can't describe exactly what he/she wants. Help him/her formulate a real position, thus helping to solve the problem together.

Add To or Change Answer

Sometimes you answer hastily. If you think better of it, it's a sign of accuracy and responsiveness to fix it. "I'm sorry. In thinking about that last answer I gave you, I forgot X." Listening to another question can also cause you to add to a previous one. Do it. Again, a strong move to forthrightness and alertness.

Disagree When Appropriate

Don't just roll over and play dead. That shows no spirit or conviction about your work. After you get all the information about what the boss perceives as wrong, you can come back with hard data to show that your point of view *also* had validity. Be sure you can show credible evidence, and show how your approach was a viable alternative.

Don't Go for a "Win"

In such a confrontation, don't think of it as win-lose. Rather, see it as finding room to accommodate to another point of view, the one held by the person in charge!

If You're Wrong

Say it! Don't grovel, but say what you've learned. Show that you now see what the mistake was. But do it constructively.

"In retrospect I can see that was a bad decision. That concerns me very deeply, since I don't like making mistakes—ever. I would surely like not to repeat the process that led me to it. What would you suggest about how to avoid that in the future?"

This will assure the boss that you're open to criticism and willing to learn and fix mistakes, not to deny them and therefore continue to make them.

If It Gets Personal

Pleasantly, try this:

"Can I ask for a moment here? It feels like we're talking more about my character and less about what I *did* on such-and-such an occasion. You know, I've worked here for a while and proven myself a loyal and