

Clarify. Solve. Propel.

WORKING WITH JONATHAN SOP

You can always depend on me for my support. I'm fair and honest. I love solving problems, and care deeply about people. My job is to set the direction for the company, and then to help you be as successful as possible at Kidorable. You can depend on me to be calm and clearheaded in the face of adversity.

Working with me has some particular challenges. I have an extreme need to understand, for things to make sense. I'm very open-minded and open to new ideas, but those ideas need to be presented in a logical way. Otherwise I'll see the change as a failure to stick to the agreed plan, rather than as an improvement to the plan, which will nearly always be welcome.

Instead of saying "I think we should do this," try "Even though we normally do that, I think this would be better because of reason A." This will let me know you didn't simply forget or ignore the way we normally do things. I compartmentalize emotion from business. When dealing with a business issue, I'm dismissive of what I consider 'emotional clutter.' If the business argument for doing something is emotionally based, it is likely to be dismissed. Therefore, talk about emotions with me in emotional terms, not in business terms. For example, if two people are assigned a project and their interpersonal issues are getting in the way, avoid bringing it to my attention by saying a project won't work because those two hate each other. I'm likely to dismiss that. Instead, bring the emotional issue to my attention in isolation, saying that these two hate each other and it's affecting morale. That's something I can understand and address.

My default position is to let you do what you think is best, even if I disagree. However, it is still very important to me to understand why you made your decision. I'm more interested in your process than your result. Therefore I will often ask you a series of questions that may seem patronizing or leading. This is not my intent. Please don't take offense. I'm just trying to understand your thought process, and to make sure I understand all the relevant facts. I never ask questions to which I already know the answer. Once I'm comfortable with the situation, the conversation will often end abruptly. This just means I'm satisfied and have moved on to the next item of interest.

I look at both details and the big picture. I'm quick to notice patterns and inconsistencies. Even if I agree with your idea, I will point out inconsistencies in your reasoning. This can be intimidating. Please don't interpret this as a lack

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of trust or a lack of agreement. I'm feeding my need to make sense of things, to question assumptions, and to make the best decision. I receive great value from these exchanges. Even though these inconsistencies don't matter 90% of the time, I believe that breakthroughs come from creatively resolving these inconsistencies.

I'm very literal. It's rare for me to say something I don't mean. For example, if I directly ask you to do A, I really want you to do A. However, if I say doing A would be interesting, or that doing A might be a good idea, it's just a thought for you to consider, and I don't expect you to act on it unless you truly think it's best. I expect the same directness from the people around me. I'm turned off by excuses, rationalizations, and insincerity, however well-meaning. I like to see things as they really are. I appreciate people who earnestly learn from mistakes, rather than those who dwell on failure or point fingers.

I'm extremely introverted. Although I can interact well with individuals and small groups, I almost always prefer being alone. Small talk is a huge turnoff for me. I like to get to the point, solve a problem, and move on. Please don't interpret this as a lack of interest. I'm very observant of those around me and care deeply about them as individuals. I have a great affection for everyone I work closely with, even if I often don't express it.

I almost never complain. At the same time, I'm always trying to add value and make things better. It's not uncommon for a task to be completed with 99% success, for me to give 20 seconds praise to the 99% and spend an hour on the 1% that can be improved. Please don't interpret this as lack of appreciation. I'm bored by the past, and by things that work well without my involvement. I'm genuinely excited and motivated by solving problems and making things better for myself and others. If this gets to be too much, you should feel very comfortable telling me you need a break. I'm quick to say things like great job, this is good work, and thank you. At the same time, I won't say these things if I don't sincerely mean them. While short in duration, this praise is heartfelt.

I love meetings. Rather than being something that takes people away from what they're supposed to do, I see meetings as an essential responsibility, the time for problems to be solved, priorities to be decided, and alignment to occur. These meetings can sometimes stretch for several hours. If you are getting tired, or if it's late and you want to go home, you should feel very comfortable saying so. I respect you and your time, especially the time you spend outside of work.

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While I often won't volunteer information, I am always open to questions. If you ever feel you don't get the feedback or information you want, please just ask. My door is always open and you will always be welcomed.

Lastly, I'm a glutton for self-improvement. Please tell me how I can be a better manager for you. Keep in mind the above and we'll succeed magnificently together.

In a nutshell summary:

- Never underestimate my need to understand. Please be patient with my questions, even if the answers seem obvious. Please don't be intimidated or feel uncomfortable when I question your assumptions or point out inconsistencies.
- Remember to separate emotional issues from business issues with me.
- I'm extremely introverted. I typically won't initiate a conversation unless I have something important to say, at which time I'll be very direct. Please don't interpret this as lack of interest.
- I love to solve problems. Things that work well bore me. My sincere appreciation is frequent but brief.
- My door is always open and I'm always open to questions. You can ask me anything. I want to know your thoughts. I want to hear your feedback.