

Work + Money

Should you "friend" your boss on Facebook?



by Diane K. Danielson, on Wed Apr 16, 2008 6:51am PDT

To friend or not to friend ... that is the question ... on Facebook. What happens when your boss wants to be your friend, or should you send a friend request to your boss? These are questions looked at by [The Boston Globe](#):

"Ali Riaz has 126 friends on his [facebook.com](#) account. Ten of them are his employees.

Riaz doesn't mind befriending his staff members online -- as long as they initiate the process. "I don't want to impose," said Riaz, chief executive officer of Attivio, a Newton software company. "Everyone has a different definition of what is personal and private. There is a line there, but it's a wiggly line. Whenever you are in a power position, you have to be careful."

The "friend" blurry-line question, however, is not just limited to Facebook. Yesterday I was listening in when my co-host from **Smash the Ladder**, Anita Bruzzese, was talking with author Dr. Stephan Poulter, author of "**The Mother Factor: How Your Mother's Emotional Legacy Impacts Your Life.**" (And, no, it's not a "blame your mom for all your problems" book, it's focused on factors from childhood that may affect your workstyle -- he has one about fathers too.) I bring this up because he listed as one of the toughest "mother-child" relationships to overcome with regard to your career is the "Best Friend Mom." Why? Because that child grows up with no concept of authority and structure, and therefore, corporate America comes as a total shock. Poulter, in fact, recommends that those individuals stick to contract work or become self-employed.

Just think about it. Britney, Paris, Lindsey ... they all had BFM's (Best Friend Moms). Look where that got them. I have also read a few times that *The Gilmore Girls*, despite it's popularity, was the worst thing to happen to teenage girls by ushering in the BFF mom who shares all her problems (personal and professional), not to mention her clothes, with her children. Good thing I never watched the show. One of the many reasons I stopped watching *Desperate Housewives* was that I couldn't stand Teri Hatcher's character because she made her daughter be the grownup so she could play teenager. Yet, before yesterday, I didn't think about the effect this would have on young people's abilities to function in a corporate environment.

It's interesting. I'm all for open communication and everyone being friends, and even love Gen Y's for demanding their seat at the table as I think corporate America does need some shaking up. But, I'm not for a society with absolutely no sense of authority and no sense of privacy. (*Note to every high school in America: Can you put [Lord of the Flies](#) back on the reading lists!*) I guess it's all about moderation. So, back to where we started: When it comes to "friending" your boss, I think it's fine if they do, AND if you keep them at a professional level when it comes to your Facebook privacy settings.* As for "friending" your kids or your mom? That's a personal question, but as we're learning, it's one that can even affect your professional life.

--- Diane K. Danielson
ceo, [www.DowntownWomensClub.com](#)