

follow its mantras when they have their own assistant one day! Clever and makes a great gift, too -- I'm sending to all my former assistant friends.

From the Hollywood assistant trenches, a hilarious guide to surviving life at the bottom of the totem pole. I will not make you sort my MMs by color. I will not take off four hours in the middle of the day to go shopping and then announce upon my return that "it's going to be a late one—we need to catch up!" I will not request that you create and maintain my online dating profile. Welcome to the wickedly funny world of To My Assistant, where overworked and underappreciated assistants finally get their due. We've all been there. You might even be there right now. Do you depend upon your college education to handle crucial business decisions such as memorizing your boss' lunch order, trying to schedule four meetings where only one can go, and helping your boss detag Facebook photos? Or what about those awesome days when you're instructed to "send me that thing from a week ago," "call that guy I wanted to call," or "book me a table at that restaurant that girl said was really good," and are then berated when you're not able to figure out immediately what your boss is talking about? To My Assistant compiles everything that disgruntled and optimistic assistants everywhere promise NEVER TO DO when, one day, they have assistants of their own. From ridiculous requests and backhanded compliments to outright insults, and complete with helpful tips and tricks for Boss Wrangling—like what you can learn about your boss's mood from his meal choices, how to navigate such professional minefields as requests for your opinion and interactions with your boss's children and pets, and advanced translation techniques for incoherent e-mails and text messages—these pages are just what the underpaid masses need to survive (and laugh at) the daily injustices of life at the bottom of the totem pole.

"Former Hollywood office grunt [Lydia Whitlock] turned her bottom-of-the-totem-pole misery into blog-to-book gold." –Entertainment Weekly
"Written from the perspective of an unnamed assistant who's learned how awful bosses can be — and swears not to repeat the abuses when he or she is on top...a knowing what-to-expect guide." –The New York Post
About the Author
LYDIA WHITLOCK graduated from Yale in 2008 with a degree in Film Studies and moved to L.A. with the hopes of making it big in show biz. Instead, she found herself a Hollywood assistant, where her experiences inspired her to create the popular blog ToMyAssistant.com. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.
Life at the Office Every Single Day
All the Little Things That Drive You Insane
Quadrupling Your Workload (Unnecessarily)
I will not tear confidential documents into many small and -irregularly--sized pieces before handing them to you to shred, one by one.
Dictation (Repetitive)
If I ever ask you to take dictation, it will be when I don't already have something written down. I will not make you come into my office and try to keep up while I read aloud from a set of notes I already put on paper but refuse to just hand to you, because I enjoy hearing the sound of my own voice and think my thoughts are magnificent when read out loud in a dramatic tone.
Clothing (Yours)
When you come into work dressed well, I won't say, "You look nice. Do you have an interview?"
Office Celebrations (Exclusions)
I will not make you sit at your desk and answer my phones while everyone in the office (including myself) enjoys cake and ice cream in the conference room to celebrate someone's birthday.
Decorations (Mandatory)
I will not make you hang my child's crayon drawings of you above your desk, rather than the list of important phone numbers you refer to on an hourly basis, especially if those drawings imply that you have four chins.
Projects (Revisions)
When you're working on a project and bring me a first draft, I will not make a single revision and hand it back to you, causing you to think there was only one thing wrong with it, and then repeat this action fifty times over a span of four hours, taking you on an emotional -roller--coaster ride by repeatedly flummoxing your hopes that the draft you just gave me was the last.
Brevity (Excessive)
I will not ask you to write me a summary of a Wikipedia article.
Anger (Mine)
When I'm angry at a person or situation, I won't expect you to be as upset about it as I am. I will expect you to be the less crazy person in our working relationship, not a pandering sycophant who only fuels the flames of my emotional outbursts. When you remain calm and helpful throughout one of my fits of pique, I'll appreciate it instead of turning my anger -toward you for being "too cool for school."
The Conference Room (Making Up My Mind)
When you ask me if you should book the conference room for a meeting -that's two weeks away, and I say, "Nah. I'll do it in my office," that means I will actually be taking the meeting in my office, not telling you ten minutes beforehand that "you should have booked the conference room anyway, because you know how messy my office gets sometimes!"
Permission (Unnecessary)
I will not make you ask me if you can go to the bathroom, as if I'm your kindergarten teacher. I'll trust that you can accurately judge when you can slip away for a few minutes without the whole world collapsing around me while you're gone.
Technology (Social Networking)
I will not call you into my office in a serious tone of voice, tell you to close the door, and then ask, in a whisper, "How do I untag myself from this Facebook picture?"
Feedback (Ambiguous)
When asked for my opinion on a project you turned in, I will not respond by shrugging and saying, "It is what it is??.??"
Your Birthday (Judgments)
If our company cracks open a bottle of champagne for every office birthday, I will not raise an eyebrow and mutter, "Had enough yet?" when you go back for a second glass on your own birthday.
Highlighting (Excessive)
I will not have you highlight parts of a document for me, type the highlighted parts into an e?mail and send it to me, and then have you read that e?mail to me over the phone as I drive to lunch, because I -didn't have time to look at what you just spent the past -forty--five minutes

coloring yellow and then retyping. The Internet (Learning About) I will not make you write a one-page memo explaining the origin and history of an Internet meme that the president of our company made a brief reference to during our last staff meeting. Storage (Not the Primary Function of Your Desk) I will not regularly leave random documents and items on your desk, covering the things you're actually working on, and expect them to be in the exact same place when I need them again in four hours. Criticism (Odd) I will not tell you to stop crossing your arms "because it makes you look angry." Noise Pollution (Hypocritical) I will not loudly and atonally hum Top 40 hits whenever I'm not speaking to someone on the phone or in person, but then yell at you from my office to "cut out that racket" when you're gently tapping your foot while working on a time-sensitive and stressful project. Disaster Areas (Causes of) I will not tell you to "clean up your desk—it's a disaster," when the reason for its looking so messy is that you're trying to organize the two-foot-high stack of random papers I dumped on the corner of it earlier that morning, with only the word "Here." Jokes (Reduced, Recycled, and Reused) Every time you come into work dressed in black, which happens at least once a week, I will not loudly ask you, "Who died?!" and expect you to laugh with me at my hilariously original joke. Responsibilities (Unwanted) If our office allows dogs, I will not regularly bring mine to work and put you in charge of cleaning up after it when it pees everywhere. (Its favorite spot to pee will be under your desk, because that's just how things work.) Alerts (Pointless) I will not make you set up a Google Alert for my name, so that you have to sift through hundreds of e-mails every morning about the four thousand other people with my name in the country, all of whom are more famous than I, and then tell me yet again that no, I am not "in the news." Cleaning Up After Myself (I Am Not a Dog) I will not ask to borrow your "office sweater," which you keep around due to the extreme temperatures of our central air system, and return it to you at the end of the day covered in my hair, which is very clearly a different color and length than yours. Compliments When I compliment you on a job well done, and you reply, "Thank you!" with a pleased but not overly proud smile on your face, I will not take it as an opportunity to lecture you about how you shouldn't let your head get too big—after all, "you didn't do that good a job." Pointing (Rather Than Smearing) When you're trying to show me something on your computer screen, I will not press my fingers against it to indicate where I want you to look, causing you to have to clean the grease off your screen three times as often as anyone else in the office. I will point without touching things, like a normal person. Visibility (Importance of) If we sit out of each other's line of sight, I will not regularly hold up something (invisible to you) and shout, "What do you think of this?!" forcing you to sprint to my office in order to give me a prompt response. Instead, I will just calmly ask you to please come into my office and take a look at something. Feedback (Traps) I will not ask you how I did during a presentation and tell you to "answer honestly," when you know from experience that if you say I did well, I will accuse you of being a sycophant, and if you gently say it could have maybe gone better, I will not speak to you for the rest of the day or probably even the week. Mispronunciation (Insistence on) I will not mispronounce a common word so egregiously that even my colleagues laugh about it behind my back, yet rebuff every subtle attempt you make to get me to pronounce it correctly, insisting that you are the one who's saying it wrong. Staring (Discomforting) If we share an office, I will not pick an area just above and to the right of your head to stare at when I'm "thinking." I will instead choose a patch of air that doesn't make you think that I'm staring either at you or at someone invisible behind you. Greetings (Unsettling Responses to) I will not respond to your cheerful "Good morning!" with a raised eyebrow and a sneer, making you think that you've already done something wrong by 9:05 a.m. Impossible Requests (Repeated) I will not ask you on a near-weekly basis to edit a pdf for me and then, every time you let me know that you'll need a Word document to do that, get just as frustrated as the last time and question your usefulness as an assistant yet again. Disorganization (Achieving New Levels of) I will not call you into my office at least once a week to ask you to help me find a computer file that I have saved in five different locations, each of which is a different version, none of which is the version I want, because I accidentally deleted that one. Boss Vocabulary 101 Like a damaged gene that causes vagueness and passive-aggressive behavior, there is a certain vocabulary passed down from boss to assistant, due to a belief that sounding like the boss is the next best thing to being the boss. Well, it's not. Below are some terms to avoid if you want to stop the vicious cycle: challenge (n) Typically said in an enticing tone of voice; anything described as such is really just a tedious and difficult project in disguise as a way to impress the boss. Which it won't. Example: "I have a challenge for you! I need you to sort these two years of credit card receipts by date before I send them to my accountant, because even though it's my accountant's job to do so, I value his time much more than I value yours!" Internet, the (n) A blanket word used by bosses to describe anything having to do with Internet connectivity or even just basic technology, from e-mail to IMs to YouTube to cell phone service. Example: "The Internet is broken. Call IT and tell them that. Yes, in my exact words." Let's??.?.?(v) The beginning of a sentence spoken by the boss who wants to tell you to do something but is too passive-aggressive to actually give you a direct order and therefore starts everything with the incorrect suggestion that both of you will be performing the task. Example: "Most annoyingly found in the sentence "Let's order lunch," when the lunch order is just for one and no offers were made to extend it to two. my office (n) Words that the boss will use to refer to you, rather than using your name, both as a way to show peers that he or she is important enough to have an assistant and to show you that he or she owns your ass. Example: "My office will handle??.?.?" Usually referring to a meeting or phone call of which you were completely unaware before you were told you'd be "handling" it. Related: handle (v) A word

used by bosses to let their colleagues know that their assistant will be taking charge of a task, whether it's scheduling a meeting, typing up notes from a call, conferencing fifteen people together on the phone at 8:30 a.m., or -driv-ing all over town to buy a bunch of stupid gag gifts for a meeting. Bosses typically use this word for two reasons: first, because they always prefer to type one word in place of more than one, and second, because it allows them to give no more instructions than that one word. The assistant who asks for further instructions will likely be told three words: "Just handle it."

political (adj) A word used to describe any situation that the boss is too lazy/fearful to deal with. Example: "Well, I'd love for you to get a raise, but I'm afraid it's just too political for me to ask at this time."

thanks (n) A word used by bosses when they realize their assistants are almost at the breaking point, in an attempt to make them feel appreciated for just a little bit longer so as much work as possible can be sucked out of them before they're allowed to go home at 9 p.m. Example: Every utterance of the word thanks by every boss ever.

Food The Only Pleasure Allowed at Work, and Rarely at That

Accusations (Based on Things That Are My Fault) I will not make you work through lunch and then accuse you of having an eating disorder because your stomach keeps making noises that make it sound like you have terrible gas, due to the fact that it's basically eating itself.

Food Orders (Bizarre) I will not give you absurd lunch orders that don't even make sense for someone with food allergies, like "exactly 25 -half-almonds" or "one--third penne, -one--third farfalle, -one--third rotini."

Beliefs (Misguided) I will not ask you to sort my MM's by color, because I believe that the brown and yellow ones contain fewer chemicals.

Taste Tests (Cruel) I will not hand you a cup of liquid, say, "Try this," and then, when you spit it out in disgust, say, "Yeah, I thought the milk smelled sour, but I -couldn't tell for sure."

Labels (Disregarded) You will not walk into the kitchen to find me munching on some snacks that clearly have your name written all over them, which I will try to explain by saying, "I thought these were for both of us."

Lies (Pointless) If I tell you I'm a vegan, I'm actually a vegan. I'm not just a rich person putting on a conscientious act, which frequently causes you great difficulties, while secretly eating Big Macs, the many wrappers of which you will discover when you run an errand for me that requires -driv-ing my car.

Comfort Food (Made Uncomfortable) If you happen to be enjoying some -not--particularly--healthy food at your desk during lunch, I won't walk quietly up behind you and startle you by saying, "Fat day, huh?"

Gifts (Fake) When I've ordered too much food and can't finish it, I won't bring my -picked--through leftovers out, covered in the weird combination of sauces I like but nobody else does, dump them on your desk, and say, "You can have this if you want." What I'm -really saying is "Throw this away for me after enough time has passed so that you don't look ungracious."

Free Food (Limitations of) If it looks like we're going to have a late night, I won't cheerfully say, "Do you want to order some dinner? On me!" (translation: on my expense report for this month, which you will prepare), somehow believing that you'll be happy to have a free meal, no matter what. I'll know that this suggestion is the death knell for your evening, and I'll present it in the appropriately solemn manner while cracking open a bottle of wine for both of us.