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**Why You Should Value Dissatisfaction
and How to Use It to Your Advantage**

WHY YOU SHOULD VALUE DISSATISFACTION AND HOW TO USE IT TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

by Kevin Eikenberry

As leaders we are taught to be on the lookout for dissatisfaction. We learn quickly that dissatisfaction is the cause of many negative results: it causes people to leave; it causes people to become disgruntled; it causes problems of all sorts.

Because of these lessons we learn to look at dissatisfaction as something to avoid, or something we wish or hope will go away.

However, on further study, I believe you will see dissatisfaction isn't to be avoided or something to be scared of. Rather, it is a natural human situation that should be understood, explored and even celebrated by leaders.

Celebrated?

Let me explain.

Dissatisfaction is simply a state where people wish something was better or different. It's a sense that the status quo isn't comfortable or in the best interest of that individual or group. Hence they become dissatisfied with the way things are.

Leadership is about moving people towards a result, an outcome or a goal. If the present situation was perfect, there would be no need for leaders – the status quo would be creating perfect results. Since there is no “perfect” and nirvana exists only in fiction, leaders are required. And the leader's work is to move (or lead) people towards something better.

So, when you look at it through this lens, dissatisfaction is simply a precursor to change. When dissatisfaction doesn't exist – when we are in our comfort zone – choosing to change is very unlikely.

Leadership is about change.

Given this connection, you hopefully can see why celebrating dissatisfaction makes sense. Here are some facts to consider about dissatisfaction:

Dissatisfaction creates energy and interest in people. When it is strong enough they want to make a change of some sort.

Dissatisfaction opens people's minds. When people sense growing dissatisfaction, they begin to look for ways to make things better – to move back to or towards a new comfort zone.

Dissatisfaction provides an opportunity for change. As I've already stated, until people are dissatisfied with the way things are now, they are unlikely to want to change.

Using Dissatisfaction to Your Advantage

Now that you see the clear connection between dissatisfaction and change, here are six ways you can use these facts to your advantage:

Stimulate conversation. When you sense dissatisfaction it is an opportunity for you to ask questions and engage people in conversation about their concerns, dissatisfaction and frustrations. If you bury your head in the sand or avoid the issue, you increase the chance of getting the negative results mentioned earlier. You won't have to think too long to find examples of this happening in your life.

Create understanding. Conversation can create understanding. As a leader, strive to understand the source(s), depth and potential impact of the dissatisfaction. This understanding will be helpful to you and the other person as well.

Offer the alternatives. Once you understand the dissatisfaction you can help others find solutions. This can be a joint process or you can independently offer alternatives based on your view of the situation. Possible changes are the first step to alleviating dissatisfaction or transforming it into something positive.

Help people move toward the new future. With your help, people can see a new future, one that removes or diminishes the dissatisfaction and creates a better future. As a leader it is your job to create a new future that benefits the organization and its customers. This is at the heart of our jobs as leaders, and dissatisfaction can be the impetus for making it happen. Without your help, especially at this point, dissatisfaction can lead to chaos. With this step, you can make change more positive and possible.

Help people get unstuck. Understanding the dissatisfaction and seeing a new future isn't enough. People must also know how to get there. As a leader it is your job to help create a plan and a path-way towards the new future. Recognize this role and take it gratefully. You can help people become more satisfied and, in doing so, create better results for individuals and your entire organization. The added benefit is that you will build your credibility and effectiveness as a leader at the same time.

Dissatisfaction needn't be avoided or seen as a negative. Instead, view dissatisfaction as an opportunity to create change and new results for everyone. When you do this, everyone wins, and you are developing into an even more effective leader.

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Bud to Boss provides new leaders and organizations looking to develop new leaders with insight, resources and powerful learning opportunities designed to specifically address the challenges of successfully transitioning from peer to leader.

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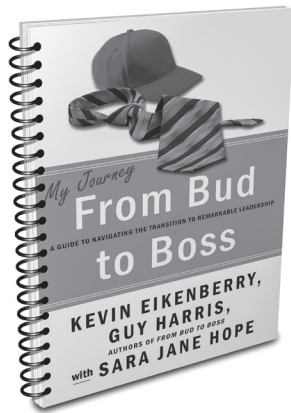
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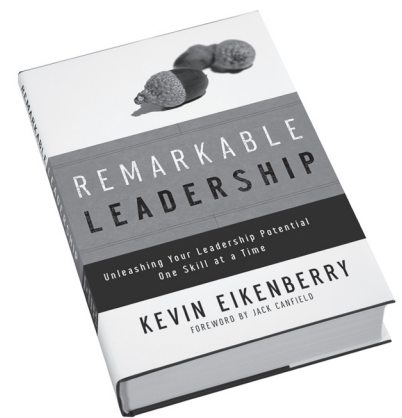


My Journey From Bud to Boss

A companion volume to the From Bud to Boss book, the Journey is a workbook designed to help you apply the knowledge gained to actual work experiences. It includes activities, questions, and exercises designed to take you beyond the concepts introduced to you during the Workshop or the book. And while this book is completely designed to be written in, all of the templates and tools are available in both PDF and Word document form so that you can use them over and over.

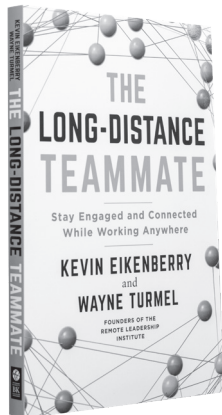
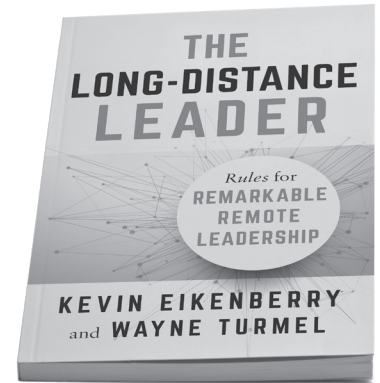
Remarkable Leadership

is a practical handbook written for anyone who wants to hone the skills needed to become a remarkable leader. This book outlines a framework and a mechanism for both learning new things and applying current knowledge in a thoughtful and practical way. It explores real-world concerns such as focus, limited time, incremental improvement, and how we learn.



The Long-Distance Leader

is a practical, candid look at what it takes to lead people, projects and teams in today's dispersed workplace. The book showcases 19 rules for being a remarkable remote leader, and offers practical models, tools, and best practices to tackle the real-world challenges from how we work and communicate virtually.



The Long-Distance Teammate

Written by the founders of the Remote Leadership Institute, this book is the most authoritative single resource for helping remote workers get work done effectively, build relationships that are both productive and satisfying, and maintain a career trajectory when they are not in constant close contact with their leader, coworkers, or the organization in general.

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