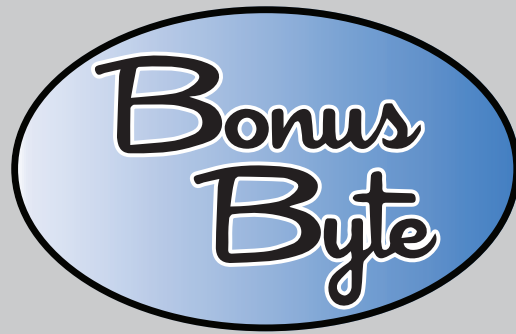


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Why We Avoid Resistance

WHY WE AVOID RESISTANCE

by Kevin Eikenberry

Princeton University's WordNet 2.1 defines resistance as the action of opposing something that you disapprove of or disagree with. If you make a short list of things you like, relish or love, I doubt the word resistance will show up on your list.

Resistance isn't something that most of us cherish or are drawn to – at least personally. True, some may enjoy observing resistance as a third party to it – which could be one explanation for boxing, professional wrestling and the success of the Jerry Springer Show - but few of us look for or enjoy resistance.

Which is why we so often choose to avoid it.

Here are seven major reasons why people tend to avoid resistance.

We are taught to avoid it. As kids, we are taught to agree – or at least get along – with our teachers, our parents, other authority figures and other kids (or at least not make our disagreement or disapproval public), and while the purposes for these behaviors might not be completely about resistance (they may also be about respect among other things), most people seem to connect the lesson to avoiding resistance. In fact, there is a common phrase that reinforces this teaching – “taking the path of least resistance.”

We don't want to be called names. Extensions of the “that's what I was taught” reasoning are the thoughts that “I don't want to rock the boat, or cause a scene.” If you avoid resistance the boat may stay stable, but if you do confront issues, propose potential changes or just not agree with someone you might be called names – like “rebel” or “troublemaker.”

We think resistance is a bad thing. If you think all mushrooms you see in the woods are poisonous, you'll avoid them. If you think all Clint Eastwood movies are Westerns and you don't like Westerns, you'll avoid anything starring Clint. Likewise, if your belief is that resistance is inherently negative, you'll tend to avoid it.

We take it personally. If someone resists your idea, you might take that resistance as a personal attack. Have you ever been told your idea was stupid or that your approach wouldn't work? Even if the comment wasn't a personal attack, it often leaves us feeling that way. Since most people don't like to be attacked (even verbally), logically, you can avoid that feeling by avoiding the resistance.

We don't know how to deal with it. If you have long avoided resistance, you might not know how to deal with it in a positive and constructive way. Resistance is like many other things, if you don't have knowledge and the proper tools, you might shy away from it.

We think it will lead to conflict. For many people resistance and conflict are synonymous. And if you don't like conflict and see it as the necessary outcome of voicing your resistance; you'll likely avoid the resistance in the first place.

We think avoiding it is the easiest approach. Humans are basically lazy. Since most people consider “the path of least resistance” to be the equivalent of the “easiest path”, that is often the one selected. It only makes sense, after all, to avoid something we think is bad and that would be difficult to do something about anyway, right?

So is all of this avoiding such a bad thing?

Generally, to be blunt, yes.

Why?

Resistance promotes growth. In the physical world without an opposing force (resistance) we couldn't strengthen our muscles.

In the interpersonal world, resistance is a sign of energy; energy that can be used in positive ways, but only if it is explored.

If no one disagrees with a new idea (offers some resistance) will a better idea be found?

Without opposition (or resistance) how many new products would be created?

Without some admission of problems (a sign of resistance) will teams or relationships ever be revitalized?

Ask yourself which of the excuses outlined above have you used in the past, and how would you benefit from overcoming your urge to avoid some resistance today?

ABOUT BUD TO BOSS

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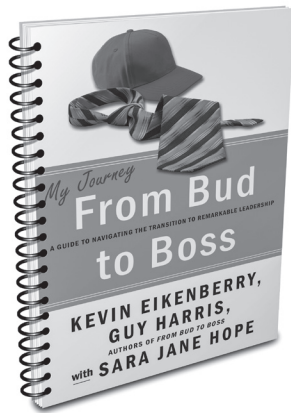
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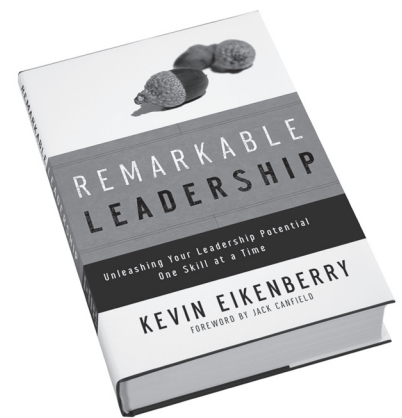


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A companion volume to the From Bud to Boss book, the Journey is a workbook designed to help you apply the knowledge gained to actual work experiences. It includes activities, questions, and exercises designed to take you beyond the concepts introduced 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.

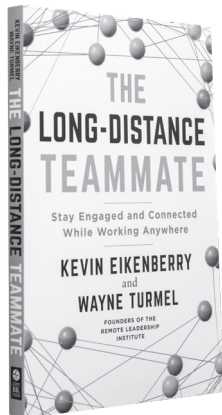
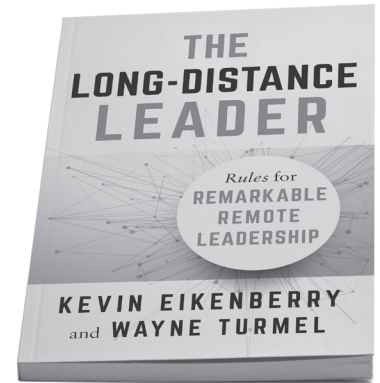
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is a practical handbook written for anyone who wants to hone the skills needed to become a remarkable leader. This book outlines a framework and a mechanism for both learning new things and applying current knowledge in a thoughtful and practical way. 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.



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