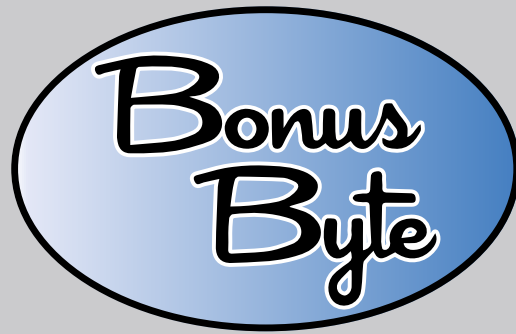


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**The Differences Between Feedback
and Advice, and Why It Matters**

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FEEDBACK AND ADVICE, AND WHY IT MATTERS

by Kevin Eikenberry

Feedback and advice.

In modern organizational life they are related terms.

When you look at them grammatically, they are connected, but not as related as I thought before I researched them a bit. From [Dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com) here are the relevant definitions for each word, and some synonyms too:

Feedback: noun – (3) a reaction or response to a particular process or activity: He got very little feedback from his speech.

Synonyms include: observation, retaliation, assessment, evaluation, criticism, sentiment and comeback.

Advice: noun – (1) an opinion or recommendation offered as a guide to action, conduct, etc.: I shall act on your advice.

Synonyms include: recommendation, encouragement, consultation, information, instruction and proposition.

And in everyday use they are definitely different.

Consider what you “know” if your colleague John says, “I need to give George some feedback.” I’m guessing what you “know” is that John needs to tell George how something didn’t go so well!

And if you hear John say, “I want to give George some advice,” you probably are less sure exactly what the situation is. But, it might be something positive or even something George requested, right?

Feedback and advice.

In a variety of other places I have written about the importance of feedback and have talked about the need for more balanced feedback – positive and negative – that also include comments about the past as well as thoughts about the future (often called feed-forward). These combinations lead to a far more useful model for what feedback can and should be than the usually unspoken thought that “feedback = negative comments about past performance.”

The synonyms reinforce this difference – notice the negative tone of the synonyms for feedback (e.g. retaliation?) versus those for advice (e.g. encouragement).

Feedback and advice.

I think there is one other important difference for leaders – that should be considered by coaches and people interested in helping others develop their skills.

How often do most people seek out, and truly want, feedback (given its tarnished image)? Not so much. And yet, if people truly want to improve or get better at anything, how open are they to advice? Very open!

Your job as a leader is to communicate with people in a way that your messages can best be received. This means you must set up the conversation for ultimate success. So choosing your words can be helpful.

Telling people you need to give them some feedback (especially if you say that on a Friday afternoon when scheduling time to talk with them on Tuesday morning after a holiday weekend), might not set the receiver up to be open to or ready for your communication, even if it is mostly positive!

And in order to communicate successfully you must be clear on your intention as well. If your intention is solely to “give feedback,” consider that your message may be unnecessarily unbalanced – and therefore less helpful, more poorly received and potentially counter-productive.

You must give *both* feedback and advice – a balanced look at performance past and future – in order for your communication to have the best chance to be received.

The bottom line is that you must provide those you lead with observations and data about their past performance: both what is going well and what might need to improve (i.e. give them feedback). And, whether we have nurtured their thirst for improvement yet or not, you also must help them see how to translate past performance into future performance (i.e. give them advice).

Feedback and advice.

Similar, but not the same. Recognizing the differences and doing both is one key to your success as a leader.

ABOUT BUD TO BOSS

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.

To speak with someone about how we can help you or your organization, send a note to **info@BudtoBoss.com** or call the number on this page.

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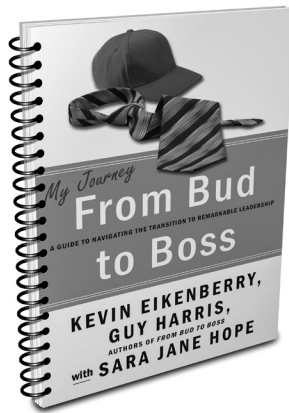
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The Kevin Eikenberry Group
8021 Westover Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46268

(317) 387-1424

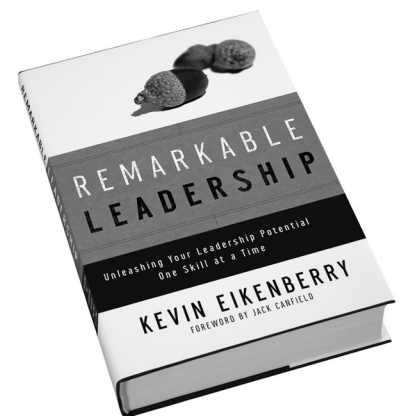


My Journey From Bud to Boss

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.

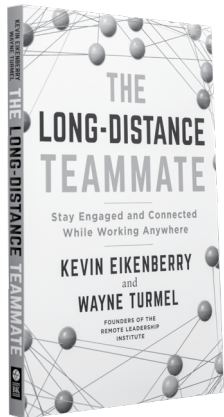
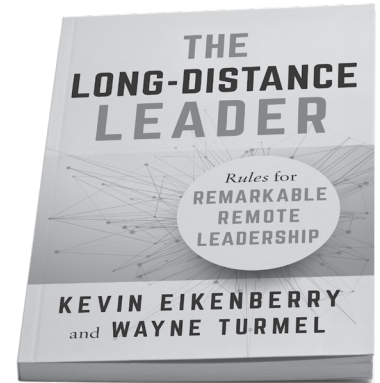
Remarkable Leadership

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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