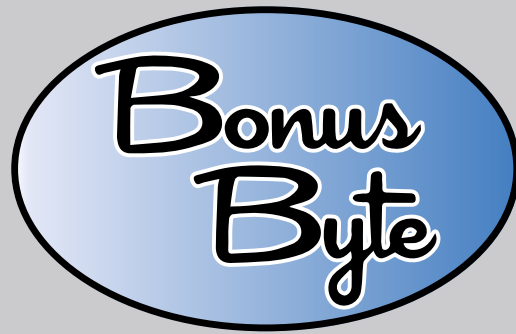


# BUD

# TO



# BOSS

**Seven Ways to Be More Comfortable  
and Confident When Receiving Feedback**

# SEVEN WAYS TO BE MORE COMFORTABLE AND CONFIDENT WHEN RECEIVING FEEDBACK

by Kevin Eikenberry

There is lots of advice for leaders, managers and coaches on how to give better feedback. I've written and taught quite a bit about it myself. But today I want to write about something else.

Something that is discussed less often and is often misunderstood.

It's a skill that when well practiced can help you build your skills faster, gain new perspectives and likely improve your relationships.

It is the skill of receiving feedback.

How is that a skill you might ask?

Well, think about yourself – or those you have given feedback to. Do you (or they) always seem open to the feedback? Do you (they) approach it with an opportunity mindset? Or are you (they) apprehensive, defensive or even angry?

While the advice below might not eliminate apprehension, defensiveness and anger, it certainly will improve the likelihood that you will do more than just hear feedback. You will learn from it and, when appropriate, apply it.

Note – While so far I have talked about you OR others, from now on this is personal. While you may be able to help others by teaching or sharing these strategies, start with yourself.

So, thinking about yourself, let's get started:

*Remember SARA.* SARA is an acrostic that describes the four steps people sometimes go through when receiving feedback:

- Surprise
- Anger
- Rationalization
- Acceptance

A further description of these steps would require another article. For our purposes now, you need to realize that you may go through these steps. When you know that, you can manage the steps, mitigate the anger (or at least not direct it inappropriately) and be patient with yourself.

**Be open minded.** When someone offers you feedback, be it a formal or informal setting, keep an open mind. Recognize that however poorly it's delivered, or however angry it makes you initially (remember SARA), remind yourself to keep an open mind. Without an open mind, none of the rest of these steps will make any difference at all.

**Look for the lesson.** Perhaps you disagree with their premise. Perhaps their feedback is only their perspective, but it isn't shared by the five other people that told you something different or even contrary. Regardless, make it your goal to always look for the golden nugget inside of the feedback. Even if it is well hidden, you can find the lesson.

**Ask clarifying questions.** Perhaps the lesson is hidden, or perhaps their message isn't clear. Rather than getting upset, choose to ask some questions. When you remain curious and ask questions to better understand their perspective and specific feedback, you will be much better off.

**Ask for their advice.** Feedback is often given about past performance. You can't change the past, but you can change the future. At some point in the conversation ask them for their advice. Maybe something like:

- “What would you have done differently?”
- “What would you like me to do or suggest that I do next time?”

Questions like those are useful. However, asking doesn't mean you have to take the advice, but having it is valuable. Sometimes even hearing the advice helps you better understand where the feedback itself is coming from.

**Suspend judgment – depersonalize it.** Often people are defensive from the start of the conversation, or get that way as soon as they hear something negative. Even if comments are framed as a personal attack, you can choose to suspend judgment and apply the other ideas on the list. Admittedly, this is a close corollary to the advice to “be open minded;” however, the barrier that is caused specifically by defensiveness is often tough to overcome.

**Say thank you.** Most of the time the intention when giving you feedback is pure – the person really just wants to help. While there may be sometimes when you don't feel their intention is pure, it doesn't matter. Always say thank you. Being truly grateful will help you process the feedback – and – it will bolster your relationship with the other person as well. Your parents were right – say thank you.

Your first reaction may be to share these suggestions with others, and if you wish to do that, great! But don't do that without first recognizing the learning opportunity for yourself in this list. Give yourself some feedback - ask yourself which of these suggestions you could employ more effectively when you receive feedback.

Always remember that how you respond to any feedback is completely in your control. Take that control if you want to gain more value from any feedback you receive.

# 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.

You can learn more about us at:

**BudtoBoss.com**

Our products and services include:

- Books & Learning Resources, including the best-selling book *From Bud to Boss*
- Classroom & Virtual Workshops
- The Bud to Boss Toolkit eLearning Course
- A Variety of Enterprise Solutions including Onsite Training and Certification



@BudtoBoss



@FromBudtoBoss

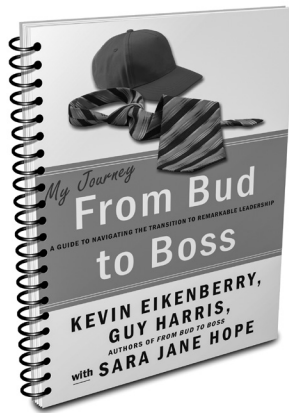


/ BudtoBossOfficial

---

**The Kevin Eikenberry Group**  
8021 Westover Drive  
Indianapolis, IN 46268

**(317) 387-1424**

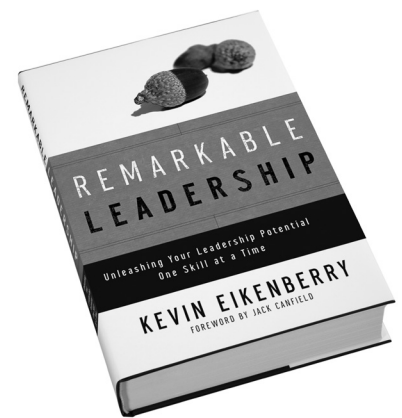


## My Journey From Bud to Boss

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.

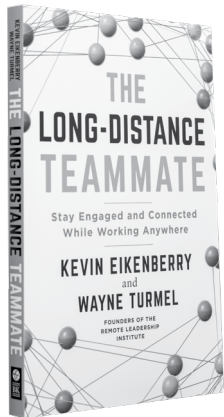
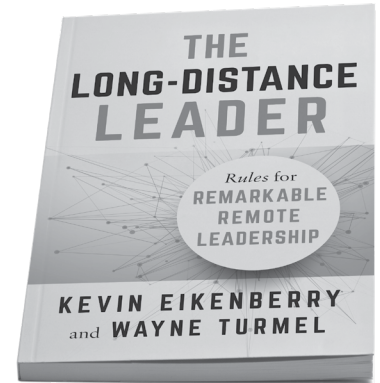
## Remarkable Leadership

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.

Check out our website for additional leadership resources including our free video training series, blogs, newsletters, podcast and more!

**[BudtoBoss.com/resources](https://budtoboss.com/resources)**