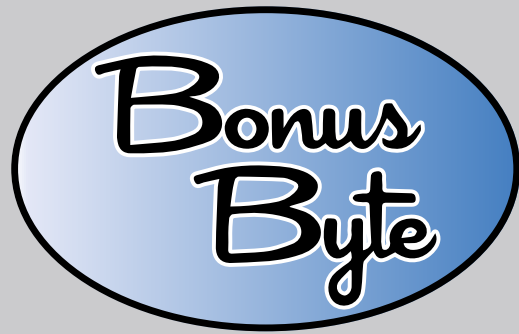


BUD

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How to Get Lazy People to Work

HOW TO GET LAZY PEOPLE TO WORK

by Kevin Eikenberry

In our **Bud to Boss Workshops** (budtoboss.com) we get asked different versions of this question frequently. Sometimes it is asked in a more politically correct way. Sometimes it is asked as a curiosity. Most times, however, it is asked bluntly, directly and with frustration:

“How can I get lazy people to work?”

As a coach and consultant, I’ve also been asked, so I know it isn’t an isolated or fleeting question. Will all due respect to those who have asked me and to those of you reading and nodding your head in agreement, you are asking the wrong question. What is wrong with the question you ask?

At least three things:

- You can’t “get” or “make” people do anything (at least not for very long or without unintended consequences).
- “Lazy” is a relative term – one person’s lazy might be another person’s normal (or even motivated).
- “Lazy” also is a word full of judgment and baggage. Including it in your question reduces the likelihood that you will have success anyway.

So let’s see if we can explore what you can do, and in the process see if we can help answer this alltoo-prevalent question. OK?

The Real Question

I’m pretty confident the real question, regardless of how I’m asked, is:

“How can I get people to do more, or do what I think is important?”

Or, stated in a more accurate way, based on what is actually within your control and influence:

“How can I influence others to do more or to do the things that are most important to me (or the team or the organization)?”

Hopefully this accurately re-describes what you or anyone really means when asking the question.

Consider the Other Person

This question is about two things – someone else’s behavior and your perspective on it. Let’s start with the other person – I’ll get to you in a minute.

Over time, people tend to do what is in alignment with their goals and their view of the world. In other words, people do (or don’t do) what makes sense to them. If you want to understand better why other people are doing something, you must first understand their perspective.

This isn't a novel concept, and while you probably aren't (and this article won't make you) a psychologist, most people forget this basic premise.

If you would like someone to exhibit different behaviors and make different choices (i.e. work harder, you lazy bum!), consider why they are doing what they are doing. Ask yourself questions like:

- What is important to them?
- What do they see that I don't?
- What does success look like to them?

Consider Your Perspective

Your perspective is likely different than that of those you are leading, or you might not be asking this question or reading this article. You see the world differently; you understand the purpose and needs of their work differently. Your perspective makes complete sense to you – as much as theirs doesn't!

However, your values and ethics also impact your perspective. What you define as lazy, how you define a work ethic, what you believe is the right work/life balance for you – all of these and more play into your perspective – and judgment – about whether someone is “lazy” or not. *Not having ‘your’ work ethic doesn't in and of itself make the other person ‘lazy.’*

Influence Strategies

Consider this a starter set of influence strategies for the situation we're discussing. While these alone may not “solve the problem,” they likely will make a big difference, and help you determine what the next steps might be.

Let go of your preconceived notions and labels. Understanding your values and beliefs about work is a good starting point. Recognize that however firmly you believe in these values they are not absolute truths. Recognize too that everyone is willing to work hard for things that truly matter to them. Lose the judgment and focus on influencing based on the other person's perspective.

Talk to the other person – and understand his/her perspective. This step is more about asking nonjudgmental questions. Questions like the ones asked above are a good starting point. Ask for understanding, not proof or as the starting point of a debate or argument. Remember you can't change the behavior; only help the person make a new choice. Ask the questions to help both of you understand his/her motivations.

Connect to their why. When people have a big enough why – they make choices to accomplish just about anything. In order to influence others, you must understand and tap into their deepest motivations. When you can help them connect their work to their why, everyone wins!

Set clearer expectations. Often the gap in behavior, and therefore your frustration and judgment, stems from a difference in expectations. Most people feel like they are doing a good job and accomplishing what is expected of them. Sometimes that is a deluded or distorted view. More often, in my experience, there is a gap between what you expect and what others think is expected of them.

Focus on results not activity. Often I have found (and I work on it myself) that we look at how many hours people work or how diligent they appear to be as a sign of their “laziness factor.” I mean, if people are busy that’s good, right? Likely, the better measure is results, not time spent. Perhaps one of the reasons we don’t use that measure for others is that we don’t want to hold ourselves to it.

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:

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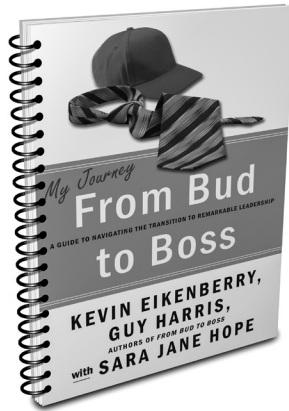
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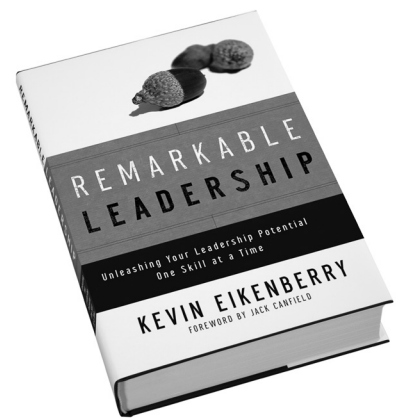


My Journey From Bud to Boss

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.

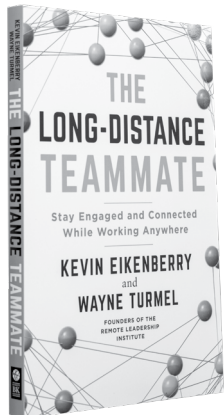
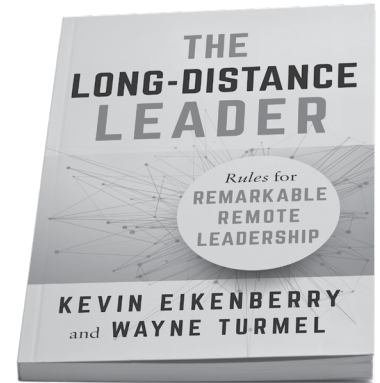
Remarkable Leadership

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.

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

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