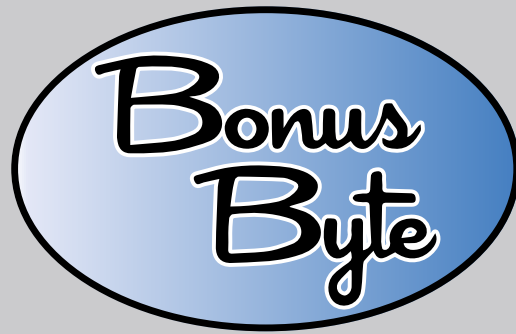


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Tips for Defining Workplace Conflict

TIPS FOR DEFINING WORKPLACE CONFLICT

by Guy Harris

The first step in resolving a workplace conflict is: *Define the Conflict in Terms of Its Business Impact.*

While this step sounds simple, it can often be very difficult. Many times people see conflicts in terms of symptoms or of the character traits of the people involved in the conflict rather than in terms of the impact on the business or the organization. As a result, people define workplace conflicts like this:

- They just don't like each other.
- They don't know how to communicate.
- John is rude.
- Mary is lazy.
- Jim speaks too loudly.

To improve the odds of successfully resolving workplace conflicts, you need to dig beneath the surface to define the problem in terms of its impact on business or organizational results. Well defined conflicts might look something like:

- Customer service call times are too long.
- Information is not reaching project managers in time for them to effectively manage contractor relationships. We failed to close enough new contracts this quarter.
- Computer support response times are frustrating customers.
- Our group productivity is down from last year.

To find the way to define a conflict in terms of its business impact, evaluate the interaction between the involved parties and look for how their interaction dysfunction or breakdown leads to:

- A decrease in productivity – fewer parts per hour, longer processing time, etc.
- A reduction in quality – poor quality control results, increased reject rate, etc.
- A negative impact on Customers – call response time, order fulfillment time, etc.
- Lost sales – Customers hang-up before being spoken with, information is not delivered to the sales person prior to meetings, etc.
- An increase in expenses – rearrangement of work processes to work around the conflict, extra processing or testing costs, greater product return rate, etc.

It might take some time to work through this step. In many cases, you could legitimately define a conflict in multiple ways, and that is okay. It is better to identify multiple different ways to state the problem so you can choose the best way to position the resolution discussion.

Making the conflict resolution process work starts with finding the best way to define the conflict. A well defined conflict often reduces the defensiveness of the involved parties and helps to align them towards working on a problem that they can all agree upon.

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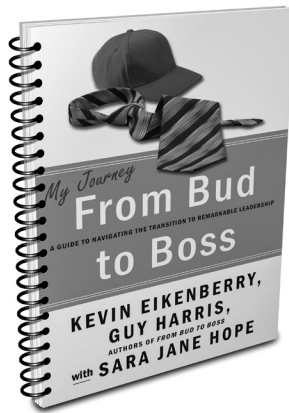
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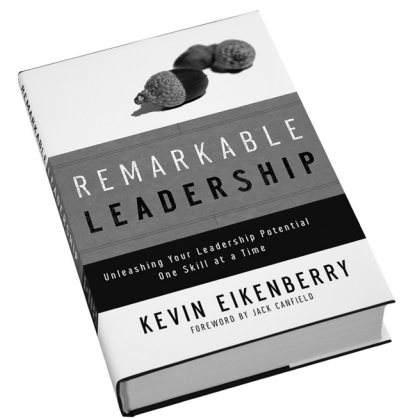


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A companion volume to the From Bud to Boss book, the Journey is a workbook designed to help you apply the knowledge gained to actual work experiences. It includes activities, questions, and exercises designed to take you beyond the concepts introduced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

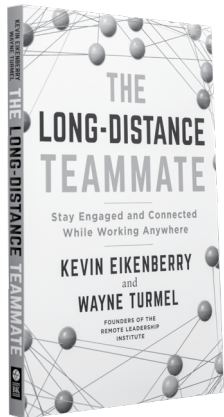
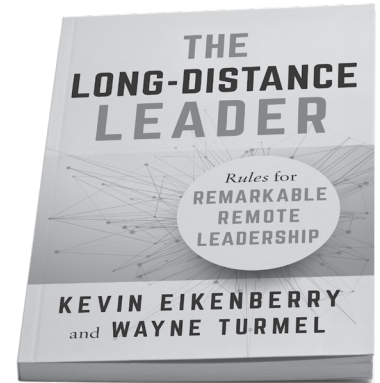
Remarkable Leadership

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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