

Lesson 29 - Dealing with Resistance

Most people have resistance to some or much of their life. Your clients will reflect this. When coaching to resolve issues or reach goals, resistance often becomes apparent. It may take the form of procrastination, fear, anger, denial, conflict, or persistent painful situations. Sometimes a client's resistance is directed at perceived external sources in his life, and sometimes it may show up in the coaching process. Let's look at some ways to deal with resistance in clients if and when it arises.

1. *Let your client speak his piece and/or vent.*

Give him space to express himself. If you react emotionally and try to stop him, argue, or explain why he is off base, you will just fuel the fire. Sometimes letting off steam is the first step to opening to a healing path and moving in a positive direction.

2. *Reflect back to the client what you heard her say, so she knows that she has been listened to.*

For example: "Wow, you are really angry at your boss and you don't see any other option but to retaliate." Or "Your daughter won't move out and support herself, and you are completely frustrated." Or "I'm hearing that you are disappointed that you haven't made more progress in coaching thus far." When your client feels heard and acknowledged, he may lighten up and be willing to see and explore healthier options.

3. *Help the client become aware of resistant behavior patterns.*

For example: "You've been [late to your sessions] [cancelled] three times now. Is there anything going on that you are having a hard time with that may be uncomfortable to look at?" Or "You've had the same situation going on with your last three jobs. Do you see any connection between what's going on out there and what's happening inside of you?"

4. Deal with "Yes, but. . ."

For example: "I've made three suggestions for reframes on your situation that could help you feel freer and resolve what is troubling you, and you've answered "Yes, but. . ." to each of them. Are you ready to move beyond this?"

5. Illuminate cost and payoff.

For example: “What do you think is the payoff for you continuing to feud with your ex-? What is the cost? What would be the payoff of harmonizing? What would be the cost?”

6. *Direct approach:*

For example: “I have been working with you on this for [_____ length of time] now, and it sounds to me like you have a pretty strong investment, for whatever reason, in this situation continuing. Is there any way you can see yourself shifting on this? I hope you will. If not, let’s turn our attention to issues you’d rather make progress on.” You may even tell the client that you do not see anything more you can do for her at this point. Does she want to continue with the intention of moving ahead, or let go of coaching?

7. *Tune into your intuition.*

The above suggestions may all work in different situations, yet every coaching situation is unique. If you consult your inner guidance you will be shown how to deal with a particular form or moment of resistance. Sometimes you may need to be gentle and soft, and other situations may require a firmer stand or compassionate confrontation. Set your intention that your sessions will be resistance free, and if any instances of resistance come up, you will know how to deal with them and move on.

8. *Check in with yourself as to what beliefs, feelings, attitudes, or expectations within yourself that your client may be reflecting.*

Are you worried about having a resistant client? Do you question your ability as a coach? Do you have your own resistance to a particular issue that the client is reflecting? Why have you attracted this person or this moment with this person into your experience? The clearer you are about your own process, the clearer your clients will get about the situations and intentions they bring to your practice.

9. *Sometimes resistant clients can become your biggest success stories.*

At the first retreat I presented, a woman bucked me and the program at every turn. On the last day of the seminar something clicked for her. She came to me with a big smile and proclaimed, “I finally got it!” Her healing and transformation were as powerful as her resistance had been. She ultimately came to many more programs and was a “star student.”

Programming for Willing Clients

As previously mentioned in lesson 15, you can program your practice so you work only with clients who are willing and enthusiastic to be in coaching and move through the process easily and successfully. Write or speak the affirmations to pre-pave desirable client interactions. Review lesson 15 for some affirmations that will anchor you in a frequency of willingness and trigger the Law of Attraction to draw willing, enthusiastic clients to your practice.

Exercise:

1. Are you dealing with any resistant clients or moments of resistance in your coaching practice? Which of the above tips might be most helpful to apply to get beyond the resistance and achieve better results?

2. What forms of resistance are you concerned about facing?

3. Regarding questions 1 and 2 above, what does your intuition tell you about how to handle such resistance?

4. How might a resistant client or resistant situation be reflecting a fear or resistance within you?

If so, how might you do your necessary inner work to dissipate your own resistance?

5. Remind yourself of your vision to work with clients who are eager and enthusiastic to receive benefit from coaching and advance toward their goals:

Affirm:

I attract and work with clients who are eager, willing, and ready to grow and change for the better.

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