Bright Morning

TOOLKIT

How to Eliminate Resistance



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How to Eliminate Resistance

Purpose

This toolkit helps you understand and respond to what is often labeled as “resistance” by reframing it as a response to fear and unmet core human needs. It provides a sequence of reflection and coaching strategies to shift how you interpret and respond to challenging behaviors.

When to Use

Use this toolkit when you experience or observe behaviors such as withdrawal, defensiveness, disengagement, or compliance that feel like resistance. It is especially useful when you want to move beyond reacting to behavior and instead understand and address what’s underneath it.

How to Use It

Begin by exploring the core idea that resistance is an expression of fear, as illustrated in the framework (see page 2). Then use the reflection questions and core human needs (page 3) to deepen your understanding of what might be driving the behavior—both in yourself and others. Finally, apply the coaching moves (page 4) to respond in ways that build connection, surface needs, and support growth. These sections are designed to be used together: shift your perspective, deepen your understanding, and then choose intentional actions.

How to Eliminate Resistance

You create the resistance you perceive by labeling it as resistance.
Make resistance disappear by seeing it for what it truly is – fear.
Change your perception; change your reality.

Behaviors:

- Fighting
- Fleeing
- Freezing
- Appeasing



Behaviors:

- Arguing
- Refusing to engage
- Rejecting offers of support
- Withdrawing
- "Everything is fine!"
- Compliant behavior

Someone who appears resistant is afraid.
They are afraid that one or more of their core human needs will not be met.

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Core Human Need	Description
Belonging	Connectedness, relatedness, interpersonal relationships, being part of a group, friendship, intimacy, trust, acceptance, giving and receiving affection, and love
Autonomy	Having a sense of control in your life, being able to make choices, and having agency
Competence	Self-fulfillment, personal growth, and feeling masterful at something
Self-Esteem	Having a sense of genuine self-worth that's not dependent on achievement, attainment, acquisition, or valuation by others
Trust	Believing you have the personal and social resources needed to sustain yourself through life (trust in yourself)
Purpose	Knowing yourself as part of something larger—spiritual, humanistic, or as part of nature; living a life of meaning; and experiencing transcendence

Reflect:

- Recall a time at work when one more of these needs was met. How did your body feel? What kinds of thoughts did you have about work, your supervisors, your colleagues, and yourself?
- Recall a time at work when one or more of these needs was lacking, denied, or withdrawn. What happened in your mind and body? How did your fear manifest? How might your colleagues and supervisors have perceived your behavior? What did you most want and need from colleagues and/or supervisors?
- Recall a time when you perceived resistance in someone else. Which of these core needs might have felt threatened? What do you think that person most wanted and needed from you?

How to Respond to Fear

Your success as a Transformational Coach comes from the work you do on yourself - the time and attention that you give your ways of being, your beliefs, and your behaviors.

COACH'S BELIEFS & WAYS OF BEING

1. EXPLORE YOUR FEAR

When you perceive "resistance" in someone else, which of your fears are activated? Which of your core human needs feel threatened? Turn to your fear and kindly ask it what it wants to tell you. Consider how and where your fear manifests as resistance. Get support for exploring your fear; this can be a hard exploration to do alone.

2. ACTIVATE YOUR COMPASSION

When have you felt afraid? When have you feared that your core human needs wouldn't be met? What helped you in those moments? Activate compassion for yourself if you're feeling any fear as a response to someone else's fear. And then activate compassion for the other person.

3. ACTIVATE YOUR CURIOSITY

What do you think is going on for the person who is demonstrating fear? Imagine being in their shoes. What might they be feeling? What do you imagine they want from you? How might you be able to find out what they want?

COACH'S BEHAVIORS

4. STAY IN RELATIONSHIP

- Use active listening and paraphrasing: "I'm hearing that you're having a hard time. I know this has been a rough quarter."
- Ask for more: "Would you be willing to say more? I really want to understand."
- State your commitment to the relationship: "I really want to support you. Can you tell me what support might look like or sound like for you?"
- Clarify how you think about your role: "I'm committed to helping you thrive" or "I care about you and want to explore how to best serve you and our community."
- Be persistent: don't lose hope in your abilities; stay in relationship with the person.

5. USE THE ACE COACHING FRAMEWORK*

- Acknowledge and accept emotions; build awareness of emotions; explore unmet core human needs.
- Cultivate compassion for the self and others.
- Expand the story.

** The ACE coaching framework is described in The Bright Morning Podcast Episode 37*

WHAT'S NEXT

Keep Learning with Bright Morning



Join the Coaching Resistance workshop.

Unlock the skills to navigate resistance, coach emotions, and create breakthroughs.

- Navigate coaching conversations when resistance shows up
- Recognize, respond to, and reframe emotions like frustration, overwhelm, and annoyance—without escalating tension
- Manage your own emotional responses as a coach, so you remain grounded and effective



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