

## Ten Ways to Deal with Resistance

### 1. Figure out what fear is causing the resistance

*Resistance usually springs from fear.* A person perceives a threat to something they value, so they react. They resist the threat in order to guard what they value.

Figure out what they're trying to protect, and you'll be able to speak to that fear and assure them that you're not trying to threaten what they value.

### 2. Listen to the story the resistance and fear is telling you

Resistance is a story we tell ourselves. What is that story? What messages is it saying? What can you learn from these messages?

### 3. Figure out the motive

If simple fear isn't the cause of the resistance, what is? Maybe there's another idea, a conflicting suggestion, or simple laziness, uncertainty, or discomfort of some other kind. Find the motive for the resistance. You have to get to the root cause.

### 4. Get specific questions

*Don't allow people to resist in generalizations.* Get specific questions or problems from those who resist; this forces them to define the point of the resistance. Many times they won't have a specific problem, just this vague feeling or hesitation.

### 5. Ask specific questions

Ask specific questions about what you're proposing, or the change in general, and the resistance: is "X" factor a problem for you? Is "Y" feature something you don't like? Are you worried about the budget? The time? The public reaction? What's your take on "Z" aspect of this? Ask specific questions to get to real issues so you can solve them.

### 6. Plan escape routes

If you know you'll be encountering resistance, plan escape routes in advance. There are two types that might be needed.

First, think through possible objections ("What if 'X' happens?") and plan escape routes for those objections ("If 'X' happens, we'll do 'Y.'")

Second, plan an escape route or two for resistance that just needs to be avoided (not answered). Can you get a friend to interrupt and help end a conversation? Can you have a new subject ready at hand?

Not all arguments are worth your time. Don't invest energy in something futile; walk away and do your own thing without their commendation.

### **7. Put a value on it**

Do the math, crunch the numbers, and be able to give a real value in real numbers of the potential for whatever you're proposing. People who resist like to see things in terms of *the bottom line*. So accommodate them.

### **8. Ask for a test run**

Don't ask for acceptance or approval; just ask for a period of time in which to do a test run of your idea or creative work. Set a time limit and arrange a meeting to follow up and evaluate after the trial period. *Often what people are resisting is the idea of commitment*. So give them a way to let change/creativity happen without having to commit.

### **9. Come back with a strategy**

Here's the secret: the strategy may be nothing new, nothing different than what you've said before. Just throw in some new terms, define a few things, and explain that you've thought it all over and you have developed a strategy to make it work. Then lay out your *\*new\** strategy.

*People who resist want to know that you've thought about it all realistically. "Let's be realistic" is one of their favorite phrases*. Nothing wrong with that. Come back with that new realistic strategy for making things actually happen.

### **10. Come back with a disguised version**

See above; just apply new terms, definitions, and explanations to the whole shebang and present as a new idea.

### **11. Reframe the resistance.**

Change the story that the resistance is telling you. What's another way to look at it? What are other ways you could talk to yourself to open up possibilities?

### **12. Just come back**

There's a lot to be said for persistence, so don't let the first No be the final No. *Resistance is often merely a way to cling to what is familiar. It's common for people to fear the unknown*. Every time you present your idea or desire, it becomes less unknown and more familiar. So keep coming back.