

Module 12 Lesson 2

Transcript

Today I'm coming at you with a conversation all about resistance. In this lesson, you're going to be able to identify common reasons why people resist behavior change, understand your role in addressing clients who are really dug into their current ways, and list strategies to deal with the unchanging stubborn client.

I don't know about you, but I've been known to get pretty frustrated with clients who come in with a goal who don't seem to put in the effort to meet those goals. I mean, what's that about, really? You make an appointment, spend your time, spend your money, nod your head, maybe write some notes, collaborate on goals, and then nada. Nothing. Come back the next week with the same issues and no movement towards change. I think we know what we want. We want to be thinner, or we want to have good blood sugar control, or we want to figure out what triggers our IBS, but maybe we don't want it as much as we want that slice of pizza.

I've got a favorite client who's always remotivating herself. Last week she told me "Pizza doesn't taste as good as feeling thin feels." Her own little take on that famous Kate Moss quote. So if we want change, why don't we just do it? What is keeping us back? Here, I have for you a list of common sticking points that many clients come up against. I go into more detail in a handout, but I wanted to run through it here with you as well. Oftentimes clients lack competence. They don't know how to, or believe that they can do, what they need to do. They're unclear about the reason for change. Some are more questioning about the benefits. They fear the unknown. It can be awkward and uncomfortable to change, and they don't know how they're going to react to it. They're hardwired. Some of us believe like I do, that we're chocoholics, or really link their identity to their food culture.

They've had trouble adapting to a new way of thinking. Clients really need to trust that we're a credible source to believe we're going to help them on their journey. Maybe they don't want to change their routines. Loads of us are really married to our routine, and routine disruptions have a ripple effect which we don't want to deal with. They fear the benefits won't outweigh the risks. We all know some of the hard, time consuming and demanding work we do to meet a goal only reflects tiny small movements forward.

I really want you to think about strategies for clients who are stuck in their resistance to change. You should have a little list of what works for you and what works for them. I have some examples from my own wheelhouse that I thought I'd share, so let's start with these. Ask them

straight up. If you have a client who has really low context, meaning they say exactly what they mean, and don't need a lot of formality and gentle stroking in their communication, go ahead and ask, "What do you think is going to be the most challenging part of the wellness plan I made for you?"

Collaborate. If you have a client who you sense isn't going to eagerly trade his burger for a salad, feel him out by asking questions to see how far you can push him. Maybe you can go from the burger to a burger with no bun and a salad. Maybe you can go from the burger to a turkey sandwich. Maybe you can go from the burger to a lentil soup. Seriously. Sometimes your clients have the answers already. They just need your guidance and your permission. Get them talking. Work together. Again, collaborate.

Make small goals. If you make small goals that can be attained, your clients can meet them and feel success. When they feel success, that can be so motivating. If you don't challenge them enough, no big deal. They can always do more than you ask or plan for. Push them further the next time. Where's the motivation? If you have a client who is not going to budge easily, go ahead and remind them of their motivation. You've got to go back to that motivation time and time again. Do it often. Send texts or emails. Remember, you're a cheerleader. Keeping that motivator forefront makes the small pat on the back for having a regular coffee over a frappuccino all the more delicious.

I hope this helps get your wheels turning. Your clients may need to be reminded that they're not bad people, and they're not failures if they're reluctant to change. It's hard. It's work. It's demanding, but the benefits can be so rewarding. Your clients are human and resistance to change is part of our nature. Before we end this lesson, let's do a little recap.

Common reasons clients may be resistant to change include lack of competence, feeling like they just can't do it, being unclear about the reason for the change, fear of the unknown, fear of losing one's identity, being wary about the information, being resistant to changing a routine, and results coming slow for all the hard work that they're doing. Have a list of go-to strategies for when clients are resistant. Some of them include asking them directly, collaborating with them, compromising, setting small goals, and reminding them of their motivation.

I will see you in the next lesson.