

## Coaching Through Resistance

Possible Causes	How Coaches Can Help
<b>1</b> <b>People just lack the motivation to change.</b> <i>High Resistance to Change</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhaustion</li> <li>• Overwhelmed</li> <li>• Might no longer see themselves as people capable of climbing over the exhaustion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take goals and break them into smaller more manageable steps.</li> <li>• Use positive social pressure (i.e. asking all teachers to share a strategy they tried at the next meeting).</li> <li>• Have private conversations with those who still resist change even after your otherwise successful efforts to motivate people.</li> <li>• Be a safe place where they can share their fears.</li> <li>• Don't allow them to slow down the momentum of the school or let their resistance become an endpoint for school-wide growth.</li> <li>• As a coach, maintain control and do not let go of the goal.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> <b>People don't believe there is a need for change.</b> <i>High Resistance to Change</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a problem of logic.</li> <li>• Exacerbated by data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach cannot break it down into logical persuasion.</li> <li>• Use the data to strike an emotional chord.</li> <li>• Show them how a problem might snowball and impact actual lives.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b> <b>"We've never done that before."</b> <i>High Resistance to Change</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People are prone to resisting steps they've never taken before.</li> <li>• They have no proof it will work.</li> <li>• It might be a waste of time.</li> <li>• Common to see this where there is a high fear of failure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look for threads of the environment or past initiatives that relate to what you are sharing.</li> <li>• Anchor the unfamiliar in the familiar.</li> <li>• Try fitting the new into a pre-existing structure.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b> <b>People were enthusiastic but then lost momentum.</b> <i>Medium/High Resistance to Change</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disappointment in results to date can cause people to lose faith in themselves and/or their colleagues.</li> <li>• Results of change efforts do not materialize as quickly as people expected or wanted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remind teachers how far they have come up to this point.</li> <li>• Enumerate and praise specific achievements where possible.</li> <li>• Teach a growth mindset.</li> <li>• Support momentum by reminding people that they are achieving objective and are getting closer to goals every day.</li> </ul>
<b>5</b> <b>People are stuck in analysis paralysis.</b> <i>Medium Resistance to Change</i>	
<p>People are so inundated with data, they can't see a way out.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pick an exit point (no matter how small or unsure) then use emotion to convince people to take a leap and try a solution.</li> </ul>

Possible Causes	How Coaches Can Help
<b>6</b> <b>“I’ll get to that change tomorrow.”</b> <i>Medium Resistance to Change</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes, procrastination is at the root of resistance.</li> <li>• This is usually a symptom of being overwhelmed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shrink the problem down so it can’t overwhelm.</li> <li>• Put the big picture aside and ask teachers to think about one thing they can do this week.</li> <li>• If they still resist, ask, “What can you commit to try this week?”</li> <li>• Build in accountability.</li> <li>• Ask them to report back to you how it went.</li> <li>• The main point is to get people to do the task, not assess it.</li> </ul>
<b>7</b> <b>People are certain “it will never work.”</b> <i>Medium Resistance to Change</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Might no longer see themselves as people capable of climbing over the exhaustion</li> <li>• People have been inundated with initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show them it will work.</li> <li>• Prove them wrong, with patience and empathy.</li> <li>• Acknowledge concerns and fears, but don’t let them stay there.</li> <li>• Find examples of where “it” is working.</li> <li>• Find a classroom to visit where “it” is working.</li> <li>• Find ways to give voice to educators who are well developed in this area.</li> <li>• Look to other schools to visit or do video conference.</li> </ul>
<b>8</b> <b>“We know we should be doing this, but we’re not.”</b> <i>Medium Resistance to Change</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing isn’t enough.</li> <li>• Often stems from exhaustion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Break down plans into smaller, more manageable parts.</li> <li>• Collaboration and accountability can be very powerful here.</li> <li>• Suggest people work in pairs or teams to build in natural accountability.</li> </ul>
<b>9</b> <b>Most people agree change is needed, but nothing is happening.</b> <i>Medium Resistance to Change</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People cannot see the path forward due to lack of clarity.</li> <li>• People only see a roadblock.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the end goal explicit and understood.</li> <li>• Vision Cast</li> <li>• Work from a series of smaller goals to light the path.</li> <li>• Look for roadblocks that could be standing in their way.</li> <li>• Discuss growth mindset.</li> <li>• Make sure you, as the coach, believe in your colleagues’ abilities.</li> </ul>

\*Based on the work from *Coaching Redefined: A Guide to Leading Meaningful Instructional Growth* by Sherry St. Clair and *Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard* by Chip Heath and Dan Heath.