



LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS: RESISTING THE IMPERATIVES

Why do we resist the things we need the most? What do we get out of holding onto old patterns?

As leader, you likely encounter resistance – yours and your team’s – on a frequent basis. As executive coaches, we also encounter it often in our practice. Here are some ideas that can help you directly or help you help any team member who is struggling to overcome resistance.

Realize first that resistance does not have to be viewed as a negative; it is actually a great source of self-awareness.

Think about some of the things that you personally might most resist doing, like saying you are sorry, signing up for executive coaching, reaching out to someone you want to start a relationship with... When you examine such resistances (or any others), you tap into a great source of growth.

What you can do or advise your team members to do when faced with one’s own resistance...

- Take 5 minutes and make a list of the things in the back of your head that you know you should do...and can’t quite bring yourself to do, the things that whisper at you when you wake up in the middle of the night.
- Ask yourself, “Why do I hate the idea of doing this so much?” or, “Why do I keep postponing doing _____?”
- Then, write down your feelings whatever the item is. Think about what you are afraid of – what is stopping you? Once you do the task, note the extreme feelings of satisfaction in your accomplishment.

Some examples...

Sam needed executive coaching – everyone he reported to knew it, but he couldn’t see it. Since he took over the division, production had fallen due to low morale and productivity. His executive team did not know how to tell him how his behavior was affecting them and their direct reports. Human Resources began to hear stories. Finally, Sam’s boss convinced him to have an exploratory conversation with an executive coach – no obligation to continue into coaching. After that meeting, he explored his resistance, as recommended, realized that he had fears of inadequacy and fears of change, he was able to confront those and move forward into a productive and transformative coaching experience.

For a more personal example... Suellen needed to go to the dentist. It was pretty obvious that a visit was needed, but she just didn’t go. In the meantime, the dental issue was only getting worse, of course. She finally acknowledged what was holding her back (time, money, fear of discomfort) and, with that knowledge, she was able to confront and work around those issues.

What are the areas that you resist the most? How would you benefit from letting go of old patterns?