

Language for Working with Resistance

To acknowledge resistance and back off

- You sound reluctant. How about we let that plan go and design one that fits better?
- There sure is a part of you what doesn't want to make these changes.
- You believe that idea won't work for you.
- I see; you really do hate gyms. Since you would like to be more active, would you like to brainstorm other ideas together?
- I feel like I'm arguing with you and I don't want to do that. Let's take a step back.

To shift into tracking readiness

- I can tell we've gotten off track here. Can you help me review what is most important to you right now?
- I don't want to lose touch with what brought you here. Let's see, it was...
- Oh, so you're saying this is something you are not confident you can do? Let's revisit your confidence about this and other changes.
- I agree there's no point in planning something that you don't believe you can do. How about we break this down into smaller steps?

To promote client control

- I sense you aren't ready to work on this right now. That's fine with me. This is your session. It needs to work for you.
- What do you need from me today?
- What would you like to work on next?
- I have some ideas about that, would you like to hear them? (before offering advice)
- How I can best support you?
- Let's review how our work is going. What is working for you and what isn't?

To work with ambivalence

- I'm hearing that you feel two ways about this.
- Tell me about the up side of not changing.
- What would be better for you if you made this change?
- So on the one hand you... and on the other, you...

To work with experiments

- This does sound scary for you. Maybe we could design an experiment together to gather more information about all this.
- We don't know what will come from this experiment. What are your thoughts about running it for this week, keeping an open mind and staying curious?
- Let's see, what kind of data would be useful to look for? Are you curious what will happen?
- No matter what happens, *something* about it will be useful.
- I hear that you are not sure you can do this even once. Let's just pretend you are going to run this experiment. How would you set it up? What would you do first? What do you imagine would happen?