Employee Resistance in the Wake of Change: Coaching Techniques to Quell Lingering Resistance

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PRODUCTION The "TALK"
DIRECTOR The Boss
CAMERA hidden
DATE SCENE TAKE
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Scene 1:
Since the re-org, Barrett has been unusually quiet. Her door is closed all the time now, her work quality is suffering, and she skipped the last two staff meetings. Her boss is going to have a talk with her.
Audience Question:

What words come to mind that describe that interaction?
What does resistance look like?
What causes resistance?

Conventional wisdom/often symptoms

- Lack of awareness
- Change-specific resistance
- Resistance due to change saturation
- Uncertainty and fear
- Lack of support from managers or leaders
Root cause of much resistance

Systemic & Personal Incongruence:
• Lack of connection between expectations or values and experience
Examples of Incongruence

- Broken Psychological Contract
- Cognitive Dissonance
- Competing Commitments
- Transitional Challenges
What is coaching?

Partnering with employees in a thought-provoking and creative process that results in understanding of the cause of resistance and provides opportunity for co-created solutions.
Why coaching?

- Get beyond symptoms to cause
- Incongruence hard to see
- Get to the heart of the matter
- Create a partnership amid the
Effective resistance coaching is as much about the coach as it is the coachee.
Before Coaching...

- Reflect on the impact of change so far
Before Coaching...

• Determine who *appears* to need resistance coaching
Beginning the Engagement

Begin coaching as soon as resistance is apparent, but no more than 30 days post-change implementation.
The Coaching Conversation

Listen at a deeper level
The Coaching Conversation

Develop curiosity on behalf of the other
The Coaching Conversation

Practice empathy

"Maybe not lead off with, 'I don't give a damn what you think'.
The Coaching Conversation

Avoid becoming defensive
The Coaching Conversation

Summarize what you believe to be the most important aspects of the individual's experience of the change
The Coaching Conversation

Collaborate with the coachee to develop action steps to further aid transition
After the Coaching Conversation

1. Reflect on what you learned about the individual in that conversation and the cause *v. the symptom* of their resistance.

2. Make note of suggestions. If they are meaningful and thoughtful, try to integrate them into the new paradigm and publicly thank the employee.

3. As you connect with others impacted by the change, note any themes that might be emerging.

4. Repeat engagements at least every 30 days for 6 months to a year, depending on the complexity of and resistance to the change.
The “Engagement”

The Employee Wide Angle
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Questions?

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