

Dissolving Resistance Reference Guide

This PDF is designed to reinforce the video module of the same name and is not to be shared beyond active Capable Life members.



CAPABLE LIFE

DYNAMICS OF RESISTANCE



THE SEESAW EFFECT HAPPENS WHEN

we apply 'more of the same' and 'try harder' to overcome another's resistance. A classic example is applying 'more optimism' in the face of pessimism.

'More optimism' doesn't overcome their pessimism, and it doesn't move you toward each other. It moves you further away from the other, causing an imbalance in the seesaw and requiring them to entrench in more pessimism.

WATCH FOR THESE DYNAMICS. WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER THEM, PAUSE RATHER THAN PUSHING MORE.

Imaginative gridlock: all or nothing, dichotomous, black and white thinking. Rigid thinking. The continual effort to find new answers to stuck, old questions, rather than reframing the assumptions.

Scapegoating: When a system is sick and needs one person to blame/carry the sickness into the desert.

Sabotage: The 'yeah, but' guy, the sideways energy person. The fear of failure, or getting it wrong.

Over functioning/under functioning: If a leader is not careful, she will play into the resistance rather than pause and dissolve it. The most common way to play into it is by over functioning. If someone is inappropriately generating anxiety, the leader will absorb it: adopting the resister's assumptions, feeling a need to prove herself etc.

COMMON SABOTAGE ROLES

The 'Yeah, but' person. Also known as the 'what about' person? Their questions derail progress or shrink open ended, possibility thinking. In some aspects they are essential to keep a 'idea only' leader in check, but if you're not careful, they can turn a group against change by their seemingly innocent negative questions.

The 'Nod your head but silently disagree' person. In the decision room, they look onboard, but they are not onboard. They walk away from a meeting and sabotage change.

The Phantom Mob Generator. (See Universal Sources of Anxiety' for more on a phantom mob. A person who generates a mob to build resistance against change.

The 'Self justifying labeler.' A person who sees their contribution a certain way that is at odds with the way the rest of the team see their contribution. They may see their 'yeah, but' for example, as essential when most of the organization sees them as difficult. Pay attention to the person who genuinely believes they are protecting the organization from your ideas or leadership.

The 'convince me' posture. The person who exudes skepticism, putting the burden of proof on you simply by their posture and negative questions. Their whole posture is 'I'm not going to commit until you've satisfied all my objections.' Beware not playing that game.

The 'veto' voter. The person whose vote carries the most weight in a decision. You can all vote to do it, but this person knows they have enough power to veto all of you and keep the organization stuck. Of course, there may never be a literal vote, but people are impacted by this person's view.

COMMON SABOTAGE ROLES CONTINUED.

The 'in words only' believer. They say they believe it, but their calendar, habits and bank accounts don't reflect they believe it. They can often resist when you lead an organization from talking about it but never doing it to doing it. Forced to confront their lack of actual activity or progress, they resist any effort to grow or change. This is common in some churches who say they love and want to serve unchurched people, when what they mean is 'we like to talk about it, but we don't actually want to do it.'

The False flag waver. They present an objection, but their actual objection is hidden from you. They present a 'false flag' so when you address their objection, you think they are with you, but they are carrying a secret objection underneath. This person is often cousins to the phantom mod generator and the nod your head but silently disagree person.

NOTE: pay attention to when the person who usually fills a role is absent and another person takes on their role. This is common.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ROLE TO BE AWARE OF:

Whatever your shadow side is as a leader. Sometimes resistance happens because people genuinely believe they need to balance out an imbalanced leader. For example, **the 'Think about it half baked, suddenly in a rush, launch before we're ready' guy.** Sometimes the reason ALL the other roles are alive in a group is because the group needs to protect against the shadow of a leader. Some people are resisting not because they are against change, but because they are protecting the organization from your shadow side. Naming your shadow and inviting people to balance you can dissolve resistance.

TOOLS TO DISSOLVE RESISTANCE:

Recruit Motivated change agents. Often the strongest resisters have the biggest impact, all the while, people who are fully onboard are quiet. Identifying the MCA and inviting their feedback and help is key.

Ensure shared weight of responsibility. Invite resisters and MCAs to carry weight of a leadership decision.

Check the emotional price everyone is paying. A leader can be so focused on the future, they are unaware of the real emotional price others pay. The people paying the most price might be the most resistant.

Give space for resistance, bring it out in the open. The intentional, counter intuitive move toward the people resisting you. Invite them to bring their resistance into the open.

Allow everyone to name fears, wants, and hopes. Naming the dynamic can help you move through. Share yours, listen well to theirs. Listen for assumptions, adjust or reframe as needed.

Introduce a 'homogenizer.' A new element of the future that you introduce now. A way to help people get a taste of the future change now.

Look at your agreed upon values. Often people forget the 'why' and need to be brought back to why the decision was made and the need for it.

Agree to not re-adjudicate past decisions. Some saboteurs will try to change a past decision, or bring new input into a prior decision. 'I never really agreed' etc.

Differentiate by clarifying values and direction. Possibly even draw a clear line. 'We have discussed, it is time to move forward.'