

4 STEPS TO BEAT YOUR INNER RESISTANCE & UNLEASH ITS HEALING FORCES

Resistance has become a buzzword these days – one that is used to describe a phenomenon that often occurs in the worlds of creativity and work productivity – a sense of being “stuck” or unable to move forward and push ahead. But, it’s also a perfect term when talking about any attempt to improve, shift, change and transform any, and all, lifestyle and health/fitness-related behaviours.

Two books in my library come to mind when I think of resistance. The first is Steven Pressfield’s book ***The War of Art*** and the second is Seth Godin’s ***Linchpin***. Both are wonderful reads and are incredibly useful for tackling resistance from a behavioural and even emotional perspective, but I’d like to bring this one step deeper into the body and biology.

How The Old Way of Dealing with Resistance Fails Us

What commonly happens when we try to face resistance is that we stay in our head. We strategize, plan and make goals. More planning isn’t always going to serve when the resistance is actually a deep-seeded wound from the past.

Refer back to my article to review this idea:

<http://irenelyon.com/2015/12/29/untapped-life-force/>

Here’s a different, less talked about way to approach resistance.

The approach I’m going to give you gives resistance a positive spin. It’s a way of seeing resistance as potential energy that can be harnessed via the development of selfawareness and biological embodiment.



The 1st Rule of Healing Resistance: Self-Awareness

"You can't do what you want, until you know what you do."

Moshe Feldenkrais, Founder of Feldenkraisian Mind-Body Science

Moshe Feldenkrais, was a pioneer in something called **Neuroplastic Learning / Healing** (and it is one of the practices I use with my clients and students) and he realized that in order to make significant change at any level of human experience (how we think, act, move, behave, sing, dance... you name it!), we must first gain an astute level of self-awareness as to how we do our current habits, actions, behaviours, etc.

In other words: **change comes second, self-awareness must come first.**

To do this, we must develop an awareness of our inner experience and this means learning (and practicing) how to befriend the resistance and all of it's qualities, sensations, emotions - everything.

The 2nd Rule of Healing Resistance: Befriend All of It

You know that saying, **"What we resist persists?"**

This classic adage reminds us that if we ignore and push away the anguish, strife, feelings of uncomfortableness and all the "I don't like this" thoughts that might bubble up when we feel resistance – they'll all keep coming back to visit (haunt) us. Guaranteed.

Said another way: not only do we need to notice and become aware of the resistance, but we also have to befriend the variety of physical sensations, challenging emotions and the "not-so-nice" memories that might pop up too. (This is where Biological Embodiment comes in.)



Here are 4 simple steps to try when resistance visits:

STEP 1 - Notice Your Body

When you feel a resistant edge that is trying to stop you from moving forward with something in your life, be it an important deadline, a difficult conversation, or a new behaviour such as getting out and exercising:

1. Pause and STOP what you're doing.
2. Bring attention to the contact your body has with the environment (I've linked up an audio exercise below to help you with this).
3. Keep sensing your body, in space, and in connection with the surface you are on.
4. Shift the focus AWAY from "strategy" and "thought." (See my mini-appendix for more on this.)

QUICK REVIEW: This first step is about getting present to the here and now. It is challenging you to not distract yourself, not do any deep breaths or yoga poses or forms of mind-body based movement to try and "clear out the junk." Just Be. Pause. Stop. Notice your body.

STEP 2 - Locate the Sensation

I once heard Peter Levine, the founder of Somatic Experiencing, say "Pain is trapped sensation."

We could easily replace the word "pain" with "resistance," as in: **Resistance is trapped sensation.**

1. Dive a little deeper from the basics of **STEP 1 Notice Your Body**, and:
2. Can you pinpoint anywhere in your body that might be "holding" onto resistance?



Common areas that tend to hold onto resistance and keep it trapped are:

- **The throat** (often connected with needing to speak and be heard)
- **Back of the eyes** (often connected with tears, sadness)
- **Jaw** (often connected with anger)
- **Chest/heart area** (often connected with deep grief)
- **Belly/stomach** (often connected with gut knowing and avoiding it)
- **Diaphragm/breath** (often connected with fear and fright, helplessness, threat)
- **The groin/perineum/genital area** (often connected with power, or lack thereof)
- When you start to PAUSE, SENSE and LOCATE where various sensations might be residing in your body, you start to harness the energy of those sensations.

QUICK REVIEW: Sensations are like gold. As is being able to locate where in the body those sensations are living. Where are they breathing and being? If we can't do this – they get stuck and the resistance sticks. For example, all too often, the word "anxiety" is used when someone is feeling a bit overwhelmed and resistant to doing a task, but when we actually investigate that 'anxiety' a little deeper, it always seems to be living in a certain area of the body, and it has a quality of life to it that needs to be felt and expressed. Which leads us to the next step...

STEP 3 - Befriend the Sensation

Body sensations come in all shapes and sizes and for the most part our industrialized and civilized society has robbed us of a lot of good wholesome internal sensory awareness. I've found that my clients live on two opposite ends of the spectrum: either they are way too sensitive to the sensations and stimuli that they feel externally and internally, or they don't feel a darn thing.

It is important to have (and build) a healthy relationship to our internal sensations so we can listen to our body's needs.

Now, back to that resistance. Once you've gone through **STEP 1 - Notice Your Body** and **STEP 2 - Locate The Sensation**, the next step is to, befriend it.



By "be-friending" I mean: Party with it. Get to know it. Like, really get to know it..

1. Stick with the uncomfortable squirmy sensations, and there'll be a greater chance for that resistance and its sensations and stories to dissolve and dissipate.
2. Can you name or identify the sensations that you've located?

Here's some common adjectives that people use to describe body sensation:

Hot, warm, cool, cold
Tense, constricted, loose
Tight, electric, tingly, buzzy, bubbly, zingy, static
Dead, black, light, clear, foggy, dense
Sharp, achy, dull

3. Let's say you do locate a sensation, or a series of sensations, you can take it another step further and become curious about how it might express itself a little more:
 - a. If that sensation could speak what would it say?
 - b. Does that sensation have a colour, shape or texture?
 - c. Is there a movement of the body that wants to come out of that sensation?
4. Stick with the sensation and all its facets as long as you can. Then, as you stick with it, see if it changes into something else.

QUICK REVIEW: We rarely stay with our body sensations long enough for them to dissolve and release. And we rarely take the time to process the bubbling up of resistance in a way that is body-based and sensation-based. When we can become intimate and befriend what might be lying underneath our resistant behaviours, we have the opportunity to transform them into powerful energy that can propel us forward. We begin to heal from the wounds of the past.



STEP 4 - Repeat Step 1-3 DAILY. Relentlessly.

Practice makes progress.

Working at this level is not simply about strategy and goal-setting. It is working at the neurochemical and physiological levels of our body system. To change patterns at this level takes practice and diligence and then, over time, new positive neuropathways get set in place and the process of diving into our body and finding sensations become second nature.

At first it might seem like a foreign language, but trust me - the body wants to process resistance this way: it's the body's way of healing from those deep cellular wounds.

QUICK REVIEW: When we start to see resistance as our friend, and not as a "bad" thing that we must conquer, manage or get away from, it can become a unique (even secret) tool that we can learn from.



Here's quick recap of those steps again:

STEP 1 - Notice Your Body

STEP 2 - Locate The Sensation

STEP 3 - Befriend The Sensation

STEP 4 - Repeat Step 1-3 DAILY. Relentlessly.

If resistance keeps showing, I believe this means it has been waiting for us patiently, all these years, waiting to help propel us forward. It just needs the correct sequencing to unlock its potential.

BONUS STEP 5 – Body Scan Audio Exercise

**CLICK HERE FOR A 20-MINUTE
NEUROSENSORY EXERCISE**

I mentioned in STEP 1 an audio exercise... so, if you click over here - <http://www.irenelyon.com/mp3/4-steps-to-beat-resistance.mp4> - you'll find a 20-minute neurosensory

exercise that will guide you through a body scan that will help you connect with your body and your environment. In our day and age we've become so disconnected from these simple elements of human experience, so I suggest you give this a try.



Practice these five steps and watch resistance turn into a potent healing force.

Irene

PS. This guide is a starting point for unleashing resistance. How each person responds will vary depending on past history, traumatic and adverse experiences when young, and the level of self-inquiry and solid somatic awareness work that has already been done. If you'd like to learn more and do more with me, you can head over to my "work with me" page to get more info: <http://irenelyon.com/work-with-me/>.



Mini-Appendix

Only using strategy, thought and behaviour-change to beat resistance can keep our wheels spinning, and not actually get us anywhere.

Let's say this resistance really is a deeper wound from the past that keeps us in a constant flurry of survival-fight, flight, freeze-instinct physiology - in such a case, those initial wounds were most likely sensory and body-based: we felt them in our insides. Things like gut wrenching sadness, or toxic shame and feeling worthless are common areas that bubble up when we are put to the test and risk our levels of comfort.

In our culture, we tend to cover up these sensations and more uncomfortable feelings via:

1. Giving yourself a pep talk to keep going and push through.

While I understand that sometimes this is unavoidable, it is important to not continually suppress emotional and sensorial qualities that might be popping up.

2. Planning out a reward that is received when the job / task / conversation is completed.

This is actually an important one that may seem like an innocent ritual, but it holds a lot of negative charge if we aren't careful. Think about this common bribe that parents (unfortunately) do: rewarding a child with a dessert for eating their vegetables. When this becomes a habit, a child becomes fixated on the fact that the vegetables must be awful if they get a reward (a sweet treat) whenever they eat them. Although this parallel might seem a little too simple, it actually isn't. If we constantly need to bribe ourselves with even minor rewards to keep moving forward and getting things done, then we lose the internal drive to just "DO" for the sake of doing.



3. Taking a very deep breath or exercising as a coping mechanism for avoiding what is under that resistance.

While one might think that breathing deep and exercising are wonderful, drug free ways to deal with resistance, they are still a band-aid. Breathing deep can bypass uncomfortable feelings and sensations. So can exercise. And while breathing and exercise are important and I recommend them wholeheartedly as a way to become more in tune with your body and improve its physical capacity, we must be careful and make sure we aren't missing an opportunity to transform some stuck old stuff that needs a little more refined attention.

