

# VCA Gym: Dancing With Resistance

## **Purpose**

Learn how to welcome, explore, and transform resistance in another -not by overpowering it, but by using it as a doorway to deeper truth. I don't distinguish between resistance as protection & resistance as avoidance. For the most part, avoidance IS protection.

## **Groups of 3:**

One person plays the client bringing resistance to working on an issue

The other plays the supportive coach

## **Step 2 – Choose an issue (<5/10)**

The client chooses a neutral but personally relevant topic (not their deepest trauma, but real enough to trigger some resistance).

## **Examples:**

“I don't want to look at my money situation right now.”

“I already tried meditation, it doesn't work for me.”

“Talking about my relationship makes me angry.”

The client's job is to embody authentic resistance (distracting, stonewalling, intellectualizing, justification, deflecting, joking, shutting down, storytelling rambles).

## **Step 3 – The Coach's Three Moves**

The coach practices three progressive moves when encountering resistance:

Normalize & Validate

Mirror the resistance without judgment.

Example: “It makes total sense that you're nervous & don't want to go there right now. Of course a part of you is pulling back.”

Inquire Into the Function of Resistance

Instead of pushing past, get curious:

E.g.: "What do you imagine might happen if we did explore this together?", "Is there anything holding you back from this inquiry?", "What's the protection or benefit this hesitance might be offering you?"

### **Offer a Choice & Recontract**

Give the client agency:

E.g.: "We can pause, go slower, or explore what's underneath in gentle steps. What feels right to you?", "How do you recommend we make progress toward success here?"

Debrief: Meta-reflections to consider

Coach: Where did I feel an urge to overpower or bypass resistance? How did I handle that urge? What helped me stay patient and curious?

Client: Did I feel respected in my resistance, or subtly pressured? What shifted when I was given a choice?

What did you discover about your personal style of meeting resistance?

Which moves deepened connection vs. broke rapport?

How might resistance actually be the most intelligent part of the client's system, trying to get heard?