

COMMON THOUGHTS WHEN ENCOUNTERING RESISTANCE

Thoughts	I agree
1. My clients want to change	
2. My clients don't want to change	
3. My clients should be easy to work with	
4. My clients should not feel ambivalence	
5. My job is to make my clients feel better	
6. The more I put pressure on my client to change, the faster they will change	
7. I go into every meeting with an agenda to get the client to do something different	
8. My client should work as hard as I am	
9. I have to be successful with all of my clients	
10. It is beneficial to try to remove my client's distress and discomfort	
11. My job is my life. (Thus, failure at work = failure in life.)	
12. If I could only present stronger arguments for change, my client would 'see the light'	
13. I am responsible for my client's behavior	
14. I should like all of my clients, no matter their behavior	
15. My clients should take my advice, I'm the expert that's why they're paying me	



This behavior makes me feel...



Arguing



Discounting



Interrupting



Denying



Ignoring



How to Convert Questions Into Curious Commands

To circumvent the problems created by questions, avoid asking them whenever possible. With just a few adjustments in grammatical structure and voice tone, it is possible to avoid questions a great deal of the time.

Ordinarily, most questions can be converted to statements or commands by avoiding certain words and phrases at the beginning or ending of sentences. In the first instance, when you eliminate certain phrases at the beginning of questions, you will change them into commands.

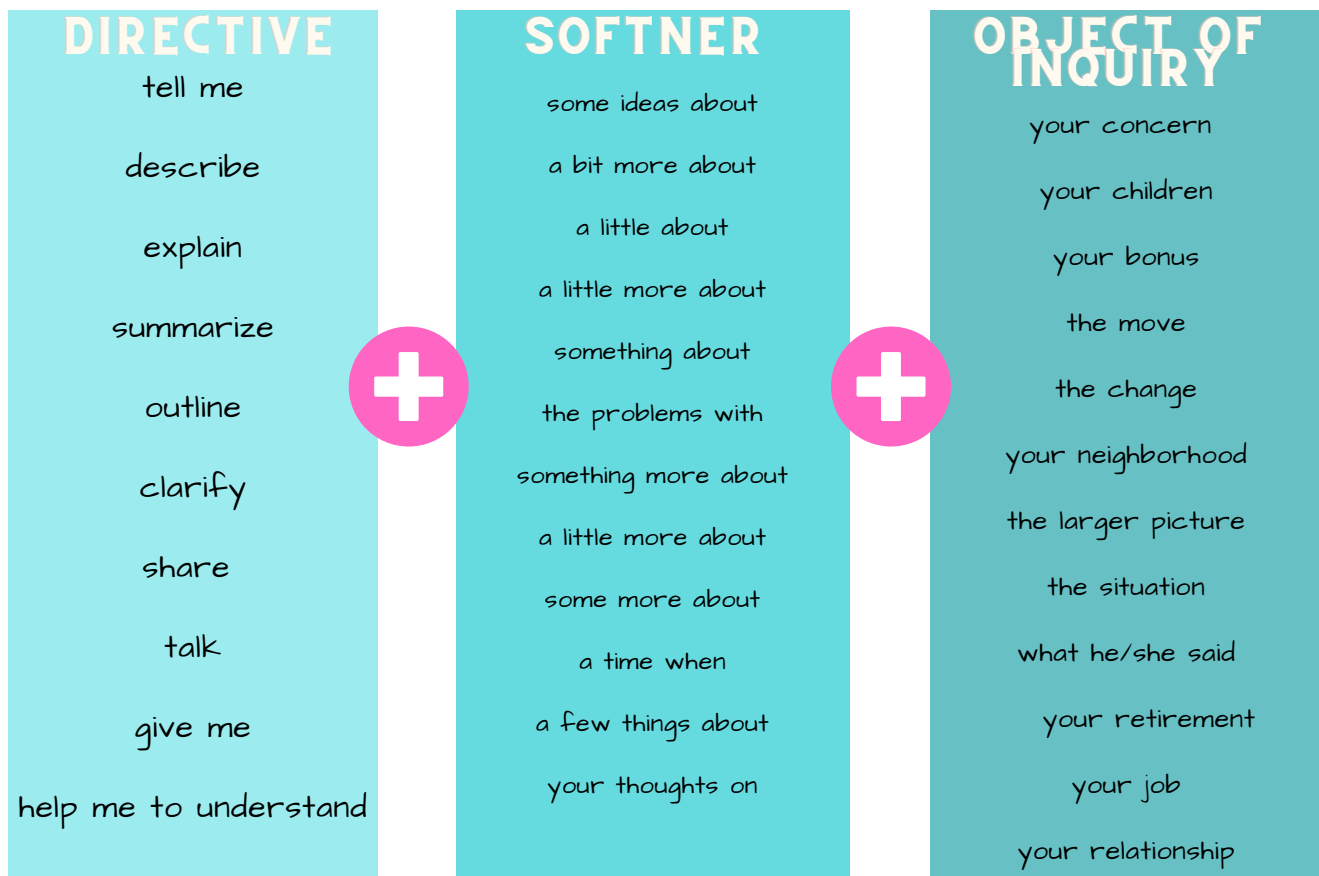
Moreover, if your voice tone and paralinguistics communicate a genuine concern and curiosity, the commands will not have a commanding feel.

These statements are called "curious commands."

When done properly, your response is grammatically a command, but has the feel of a genuinely curious inquiry.

The benefit of curious commands comes from the fact that you largely avoid the traps that come with questions yet the information sought is still obtained.

Rarely will clients consciously recognize that you are not questioning them. However, they frequently will have a subtle awareness that the conversation feels less threatening. This is because the conversation does not include all of the negative elements that arise from excessive questioning.



Responding to "I Don't Know"

Most "I don't know" responses can be responded to with a literal interpretation. That is, your response conveys an understanding of the reality that the client simply does not know or cannot formulate an answer. Even if the client is avoiding the answer, responding literally is the safest way to de-escalate the potential for more resistance.

A literal response to "I don't know" would be to reflect and empathize with the client's inability to provide an answer.

Examples of such responses are:

- "At this moment, you are really stumped as you search for an answer."
- "Right now, you are really stumped about what to do."
- "It is very difficult for you to see a way to deal with this, currently."
- "You really cannot think of a possible approach that you can take that appears better than what you are doing."

If you have acquired a good feel for the situation, it may be helpful to add a deficit statement to your response:

- "Currently, it is very difficult for you to see a way to deal with this. You are searching for new ways to approach this."
- "It is difficult to sort out these philosophical struggles. You really want some peace of mind and balance in your life."

If you suspect that a client has stated "I don't know" in order to avoid revealing some threatening reality about him/herself, simply empathize about your suspicion:

- "It is difficult and scary to actually say aloud the truth about ..."
- "You are really uncomfortable facing this aspect of your life."

If you suspect the "I don't know" is a peacekeeping deflection, then respond similarly with an understanding of this perspective:

- "You are concerned that if you provide the answer, it will cause a lot of controversy and conflict."
- "You are reluctant to tell us the answer because you worry about how he/she might feel with regard to your answer. You are worried that he/she might take it the wrong way."