

# THE THREE CAUSES OF RESISTANCE AND HOW TO SOLVE THEM

This handout helps you diagnose resistance and apply proven leadership solutions.

Resistance to change is never random. It always comes down to three human questions:

**Safety** — Am I going to be okay?

**Sense** — Does this make any sense?

**Meaning** — Is this meaningful to me?



### 1. SAFETY — “Am I going to be okay?”

People resist when they fear loss — status, role, competence, belonging, or stability.

**Leader Solutions:**

- Provide more **clarity** than expected.
- **Name fears** before your team does.
- Provide **training, tools, and buffer time**.
- Offer **reversible decisions** if possible.
- Model **calm and confidence** — people borrow your nervous system.

**Safety = Clarity + Capability + Calm**

### 2. SENSE — “Does this make any sense?”

Resistance grows when people can't connect the dots — unclear logic, vague explanations, or missing context.

**Leader Solutions:**

- Explain the **BEFORE** → **NOW** → **AFTER** story.
- Use **concrete examples** instead of abstract concepts.
- **Over-communicate** the rationale and trade-offs.
- Invite **questions publicly and privately**.
- Keep language **human, not corporate**.

**Sense = Story + Specificity + Transparency**

### 3. MEANING — “Is this meaningful to me?”

Even when change is clear and safe, people disengage if they don't see their identity or purpose reflected in it.

**Leader Solutions:**

- Show each person their **role** in the future story.
- **Honor their past** before defining their future.
- Give people **authorship**, not just assignments.
- Connect the change to **human purpose**, not corporate jargon.

**Meaning = Identity + Inclusion + Purpose**

### THE ENROLLMENT EQUATION:

When people feel safe, the change won't hurt them.  
 When people understand, the change won't confuse them.  
 When people feel meaning, the change won't ignore them.

Address all three — and resistance becomes enrollment.