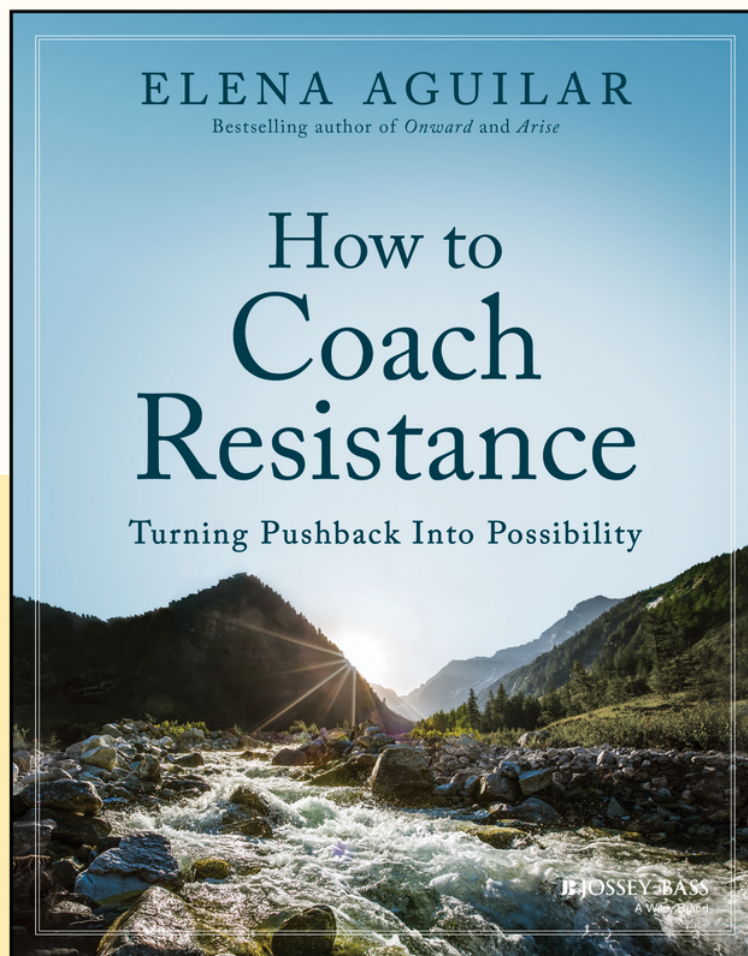


TOOL

Coaching Sentence Stems for ACE



This product is the intellectual property of Elena Aguilar and Bright Morning.
Unauthorized use, reproduction, or distribution is prohibited.

Emotions are data, not distractions. When we slow down long enough to acknowledge them, we gain access to the information they carry.

Welcome. When people resist, we often focus on the behavior we can see: the pushback, the frustration, the avoidance, or the defensiveness.

But underneath those behaviors are emotions.

Fear. Sadness. Anger. Shame. Uncertainty. Hope.

When emotions go unnamed, they often drive the conversation from the background. When they're acknowledged, they can become a source of insight, understanding, and possibility.

In Chapter 3 of [How to Coach Resistance](#), I explore how resistance is frequently connected to threatened needs, difficult emotions, and the stories people tell themselves about what is happening. One of the most valuable things a coach can do is create space for someone to recognize and explore those experiences.

These sentence stems are designed to help you do that.

Inside, you'll find phrases that can help you:

- Acknowledge and explore emotions
- Cultivate self-compassion and compassion for others
- Expand the stories and assumptions shaping someone's experience

These aren't scripts to follow word for word. They're invitations. Use the language that feels authentic to you, adapt it to your context, and trust your judgment about what a conversation needs.

Often, a single thoughtful question can help someone understand themselves in a completely new way.

Let's begin.



Acknowledge Emotions

Inquiring:

- "What are you feeling right now?"
- "What feelings came up for you during that situation?"
- "What cues does your body give you that these emotions are surfacing?"
- "Which ones are coming up now?"
- "Can you say more about that?"

Offering the Core Emotions:

- "Take a look through this and see if you can find words that reflect what you're feeling."
- "When you say 'annoyed' — what's the core emotion? What's the word at the top of the column?"

After they've named the feeling:

- "How does it feel to recognize that you're experiencing these feelings?"
- "How does it feel to say that — to name that emotion?"
- "How does it feel to share that with me?"
- "Experiencing these feelings makes sense."
- "What do you hear yourself saying?"

Tentatively reflecting:

- "I think I might also be hearing some sadness — but tell me if that's wrong."
- "It sounds like there might also be some fear in there. Does that fit?"

Staying:

- "I don't want to rush past what you just said. That felt significant."
- "Can we stay here for a minute?"
- "Let's not rush to the lesson plans. What you just said matters."



Cultivate Compassion

Facilitating the teacher's self-compassion:

- "If someone you really care about shared with you everything you've just shared with me, what would you say to them?"
- "Can you say that to yourself, right now?"
- "Could you offer yourself a little kindness as you work through this? What might that sound like?"
- "Even though I hear that you're taking responsibility for your behavior, is there any kindness you could offer yourself while you work on it?"

Extending compassion to students:

- "What do you think your students are feeling when they come into your classroom?"
- "Is there anything you know about what these students are going through that might explain some of what you're seeing?"
- "If there was an all-knowing, benevolent fly in the room what do you think it would notice?"



Expand the Story

Cultivate curiosity:

- "What's the story — or what are the stories — you're telling yourself about this?"
- "What do you believe about yourself as a teacher right now?"
- "Where does that belief come from?"
- "How does that story limit you? What does it give you?"
- "What happens when you go into class holding that belief?"

Activate possibility:

- "If that story weren't true, what else might be true?"
- "Who would you be as a teacher without that belief?"
- "Tell me about one moment when a student surprised you."
- "What would you try if you didn't expect it to fail?"
- "I wonder if... "
- "It could also be possible that..."

Create new stories:

- "What might be a more honest story?"
- "What's a belief you could bring into class tomorrow that would feel true but also leave some room?"
- "Is there any other way to look at what happened?"
- "How would you finish this: 'My students are capable of...'"



WHAT'S NEXT

Keep Learning with Bright Morning



Join Elena Aguilar for a live [Coaching Resistance workshop](#)

If you've ever wished you could sit beside Elena as she coaches through resistance in real time, this is your opportunity. Learn directly from the author of [How to Coach Resistance](#) as she demonstrates how to navigate pushback, coach emotions, and transform challenging conversations into opportunities for growth.



And for an entire year of on-demand support, join our [Coaching Lab](#).

Transformational Coaching at your fingertips.

- Access proven coaching strategies exactly when you need them, 24/7.
- Develop your unique coaching style with personalized feedback and guidance.
- Eliminate isolation by joining a professional community of coaches facing similar challenges and finding success.

Curious what this could look like for your team?
Schedule your [complimentary consultation](#).

