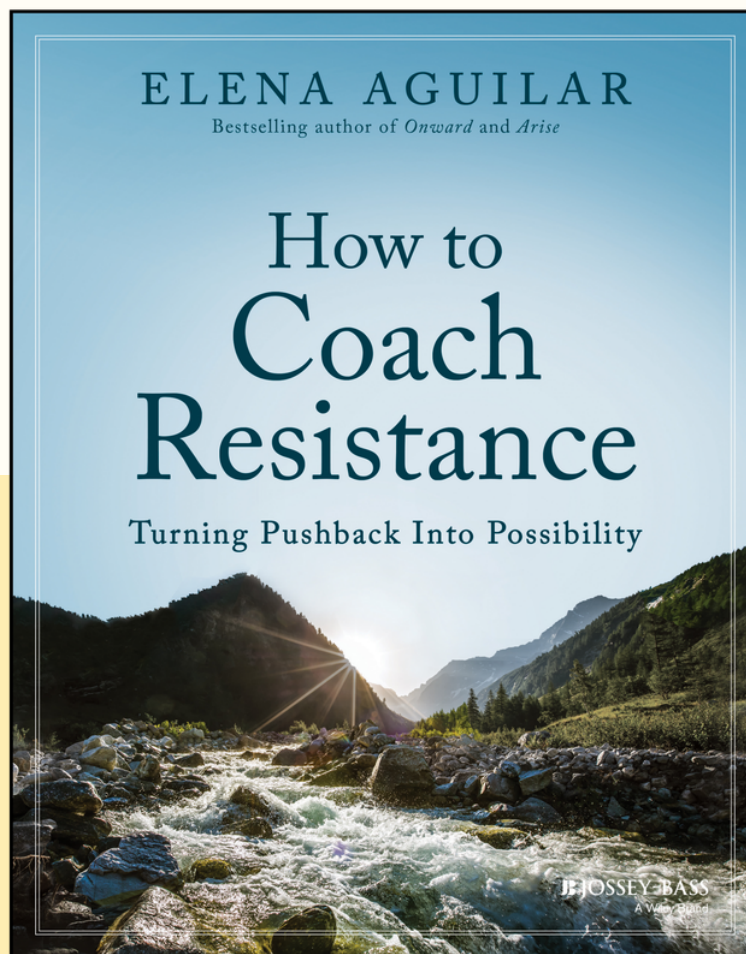


TOOL

Widen the Lens Reflection Guide



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People don't exist outside of systems.

Welcome. This resource is adapted from Chapter 5 of [How to Coach Resistance](#), "Widen the Lens."

In that chapter, I explore how resistance is shaped not only by individuals but also by systems, context, identity, power, and organizational conditions.

When we focus exclusively on individual behavior, we risk misdiagnosing what we're seeing and overlooking opportunities for meaningful change.

This reflection guide is designed to help you look beyond behavior and consider the larger forces that may be influencing what you're seeing.

How to use this resource:

1) Identify a coaching challenge

Think of a client, colleague, team member, or participant whose behavior feels resistant. Briefly describe the situation.

2) Explore multiple lenses

Move through each section of this guide. Resist the urge to jump to conclusions. Instead, gather information and consider possibilities.

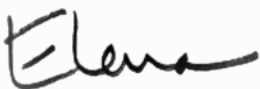
3) Reflect on influence

As you complete the guide, notice where you have influence and where you don't. Focus your energy on what is within your sphere of influence.

4) Apply your learning

Identify one insight and one action you want to take as a result of this reflection.

Let's begin.



The Situation

Briefly describe the situation you're reflecting on.

What behaviors are you observing?



Lens 1: The Individual

When we're trying to understand resistance, it's natural to start with the individual. This lens is important—but it's only one part of the story.

What assumptions am I making about this person?

What evidence supports those assumptions?

What evidence challenges those assumptions?

What might this person be thinking, feeling, or needing that I haven't yet considered?

Lens 2: The Context

People's choices and behaviors are shaped by the environments in which they work.

What organizational conditions may be contributing to this situation?

What competing priorities, demands, or pressures might this person be experiencing?

What recent changes, challenges, or disruptions may be influencing them?

(Continued)

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What messages are they receiving from leaders, colleagues, families, students, or the organization?

What aspects of the broader context might I be overlooking?



Lens 3: Power and Identity

Power and identity shape every relationship, whether we acknowledge them or not.

What formal power do I hold in this relationship?

What formal power does the other person hold?

What informal sources of power might be operating here?

Examples:

- Experience
- Expertise
- Relationships
- Status
- Access to information
- Influence



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How might our identities shape this interaction?

Consider factors such as race, gender, language, age, role, culture, ability, socioeconomic background, or other identities that may be relevant.

What might feel risky for this person to say, do, admit, or challenge?

How might my own experiences or identities be shaping the way I understand this situation?

Lens 4: Systems

Sometimes resistance isn't located in a person. Sometimes it emerges from the system itself.

What policies, structures, expectations, or practices may be contributing to this situation?

What incentives or disincentives are operating?

Who benefits from maintaining the current situation?

What system-level changes might reduce the resistance I'm observing?



Lens 5: Influence

The goal of reflection isn't simply to understand a situation more fully, it's to identify where action is possible.

What aspects of this situation are within my influence?

What aspects are outside my influence?

What do I need to accept?

What action is available to me right now?



Reflection

What new insights emerged as you widened the lens?

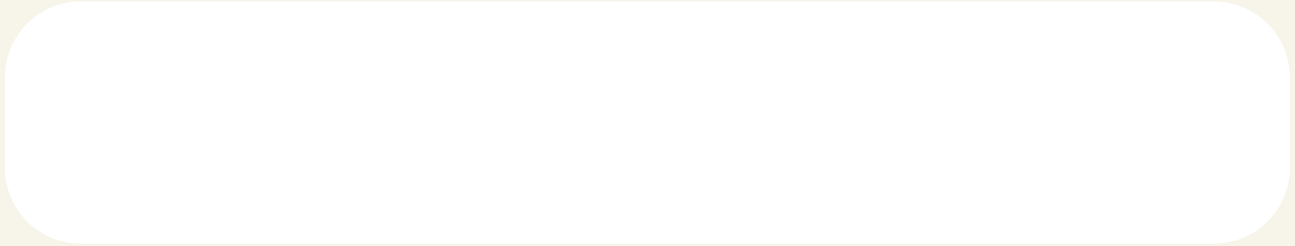
What surprised you?

How has your understanding of this person's behavior changed?



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What is one action you want to take as a result of this reflection?



As you finish, consider this:

What becomes possible when you understand the situation more fully than you did before?



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.



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