

Turn resistance into positive energy



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Download the original article and accompanying tools

This presentation is a supplement to the full article. Download more information, resources, and tools to help you implement these ideas in *The Learning Principal* (Summer, 2013).

Available at
[www.learningforward.org/
publications/learning-principal](http://www.learningforward.org/publications/learning-principal).



Source: : **von Frank, V.** (2013, Summer). Turn resistance into positive energy. *The Learning Principal* 8(4). (p.1, 4-5). Available at www.learningforward.org/publications/learning-principal.

Resistance is a kind of energy that can be channeled positively.

The most effective way to turn resistance into positive energy is through communication.

Source: : **von Frank, V.** (2013, Summer). Turn resistance into positive energy. *The Learning Principal* 8(4). (p.1, 4-5). Available at www.learningforward.org/publications/learning-principal.



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Presume positive intentions

“By recognizing that the other person simply has another perspective rather than an oppositional view, the principal can be inquisitive, keep an open mind, and ask questions about why the other person came to that conclusion.”

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Pause, paraphrase, and inquire

Pause by waiting three to five seconds before responding or asking a question.

Paraphrase to show that you care about what the person said.

Inquire into the individual's reasons for thinking the way he or she does.

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Pose invitational questions

Seek specificity about the resister's point of view to explore the person's thinking, assumptions, and interpretations.

Try to have the individual inquire into his or her own thinking:

- "What might be some purposes of X?"
- "Please say more about ..."

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Use data

Ask resisters to back up statements with data.

Use data as a “third point” in the room to relieve stress that may be building.

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Keep cool

When a person continues to argue, honor what arises in the meeting, but balance that with the group's needs.

Continue the conversation outside of the meeting, where the focus is less on immediate communication and more on longer-term strategies.

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Learn about polarity management

Turn “either/or” approaches to a problem into “both/and” thinking.

Recognize the values and fears involved that each side is promoting and avoiding.

Recognize that when there are tensions, there’s nothing wrong — collaborative professional communities naturally have conflict.

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Build relationships

Build relationships with individuals as well as with the staff in general.

Strong relationships foster a healthier environment and reduce resistance.

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Have a clear mission and vision

Teachers can be frustrated when:

- “The principal is not clear about where the school is headed.”
- “They feel unheard, when they feel unprepared to do what they are being asked to do, or when they feel the principal does not understand their work.”

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Don't take it personally

Following the previous guidelines helps avoid hurt feelings.

“You don't take it personally when you know they're not pushing against you. They're pushing against something they see. You want to find out what they are seeing and what support might they need.”

- Carolyn McKanders, co-director of the Center for Adaptive Schools

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