

## So, what if my child/partner/housemate/colleague is “reluctant”?

Following are some tips for reluctant participants... of all ages!

### Being a Beginner – how a Fixed Mindset protects us AND holds us back

We don't like being beginners. It means we're not good at something. You, your children, friends, colleagues – whoever is doing this meeting with you - will ALL be beginners. If you or they are embarrassed, or worried about saying the right thing, or resistant, that is a fixed mindset. We all have it. Now, there are good sides to a Fixed Mindset. It means you have confidence in your current approach. It means you do not blow every which way with the wind. It contributes to consistency. It even makes you feel safe. After all, if you don't try anything new, if you only stick to the tried and true routines, you can't get anything wrong.

You also can't grow. You will find it very hard to respond to this new world.

A fixed mindset can feel safe, but it is also dangerously limiting. It is less flexible. It rejects growth opportunities. And right now? We need to be more flexible than we have ever been. Over time the fixed mindset will dissipate. Sure, it will rear its resistant little head at the start of every meeting and whisper “Don't do this, it's stupid”. Well, you can talk right back at it – “Yup, this may be stupid. But it can't hurt me. It'll only take 15 minutes. This is only my fixed mindset trying to hold me back.”

Remind everyone that everything is hard before it is easy. These meetings are an ideal way to foster a real Growth Mindset. Check out this [animated explanation](#).

A fixed mindset often sounds like this: “It's stupid”; “It's touchy-feely”; “It's just a chance for you to control me”; “But it doesn't accomplish anything”; “It's just someone else trying to get into our heads”



### The “I'm right, they are wrong” problem – Being critical instead of conversational ends the meeting.

As you answer the Agenda questions, avoid ANY judgment about other people's answers. What is 'right' for them may not be right for you. What might be 'right' for them might even be to say something other than what they really feel or believe... but for them, in that moment, that is the 'right' thing to say. When we try to convince other people that WE are right what we are doing is trying to convince them that THEY are WRONG. No one enjoys being told they are wrong. Feel free to explain why you are right for yourself. Perhaps try to explain why they are right for them! You can BOTH be right and still disagree.



### So, what if my child/housemate is still “reluctant”?

Or flat out refuses?

One mom sent me this photo on April 5<sup>th</sup> with the following caption:

**“My kids have had enough of us & are self-isolating ...in the garden 🏠”**

- ❖ If someone isn't in the mood, a snack (a Super Snack?) can help. A lot. Tell them the snack (or glass of wine) is for AFTER exercise 1.
- ❖ Tell the other person you need their help. You do.
- ❖ Tell them they're much better at certain questions than you are – indeed at any and every question about what THEY think/feel. Tell them you learn so much more in a group.

- ❖ **Get them involved.** For families, have a child print out the Agenda. Have one call the meeting to order, with a wooden spoon as a gavel. Use Dr. Carol Locust's "Talking Stick". Ask an older one if they want to chair the meeting – since you don't know what you're doing, you may as well hand over the reins. One mom asked her 8-year-old daughter to take charge of running Meeting 1. The only problem? Her brother got jealous. He came around – once it was promised HE could run the next meeting.
- ❖ Ask open-ended questions. For ex., ask them how they like to 'play' with you. Yeah, yeah... And really listen. Writing down what a child says is very validating.
- ❖ Positively comment on ANYTHING they say "You love playing Lego/Call of Duty – seriously, you have 110% focus when you're doing it"; or "You mentioned eating healthy food even though you and I both love chocolate best"; after your teen/partner/colleague makes a sarcastic comment you could reply "You have really strong critical skills – I know most people think that ends up leading to criticism, or being hyper negative, but it's a very useful tool. And when you do give your opinion sarcastically it's usually sharp and pretty funny. This meeting would be much less interesting without it" (!) Play catch, not tennis. See below.
- ❖ Every person's answers ARE right for them. There is no such thing as a wrong answer. You may not agree with or even like someone's answer. That's OK. However, the MOST you can say is "I have a different opinion, would you like to hear it?"
- ❖ For EVERY complaint, objection, eye roll, harrumph, "**Play catch, not tennis**". That means rather than hit back with a disagreement or self-defense, 'catch' what they say ... "You think this is going to be boring... for you this probably seems stupid."
- ❖ For families, one parent suggested scheduling the session as the evening meal is winding down for older children, and during afternoon snack for younger.
- ❖ Let everyone doodle on the worksheets – one person might keep an overall record.

Specific tips for enticing older 'children' and grown-ups to a "meeting".

Hint? Don't call it a meeting!

- ❖ If your teenager/flatmate rolls their eyes? Blame it on me! Tell Teens (and fathers) they can be rude/cynical about me – I'm happy to draw diversionary fire. It's a well-known battle tactic.
- ❖ Give people plenty of notice – and email the agenda. One more 'new' thing on top of all the Covid19 changes might seem too much, so de-sensitize them by mentioning the up-coming meeting a few times beforehand.
- ❖ Most importantly, acknowledge that they might or "probably ARE thinking this is going to be ridiculous, and mainly a complaints session from you". And that "It is OK to think that. Maybe it will be. I'm guessing we'll get out of it what we put into it. We'll only know for sure if we try".
- ❖ Admit that you have no idea how it works. Showing vulnerability makes you strong.