



## Struggling with New Year Resolutions? Here's How to Move Through Resistance!

Have you made plans for a wonderful, creative change this coming year? Perhaps resolved that 2004 is the year you're going to finish that book you've always wanted to write, or get a more engaging, higher-paying job, or just clear out the clutter and find your desk again? Maybe you've set your intention that 2004 is the year you get serious about improving your health – actually go to the gym you've been subsidizing, use the exercise equipment that's serving as your clothes valet or dig your walking shoes out from under the dust bunnies and hit the trail. Perhaps your intention is to stick with a savings plan throughout the year or to really follow up on that brilliant idea to meditate.

How are you doing with your commitments? If you haven't felt some resistance to or ambivalence about your commitment yet, get ready. The

research of John C. Norcross, co-author of *Changing for Good*, indicates that 29% of those who make New Year's resolutions falter within two weeks, 36% give up after a month, and a full half of all resolutions are abandoned within three months. Resistance is a certainty. You can plan on being resistant to the very thing you know you want to do.

We understand being resistant to someone else's efforts to change us. But why are we so resistant to the changes we ourselves initiate? We want to change, but somehow we get distracted or delayed. Again. Why does that keep happening? Why is it so hard to stick to some of our plans for creative change, personal growth or spiritual development? And how do we get past whatever is getting in the way to make the dream reality?

The research I'm doing as I work on my next book (working title: *Creative Change*) clarifies that

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resistance is the result of our brain's physiology. Without going into all the details here, the first relevant point is that your brain is designed to both seek and resist change. This means that when we contemplate change, even the most balanced people are destined to experience a kind of mental standoff that leaves us feeling slightly schizophrenic.



It's about neurology, not discipline or will. We're hardwired for resistance. Don't mistake resistance as

a sign that you're on the wrong road or following the wrong dream. Resistance is not a sign that you should give up or an indicator that you don't have what it

takes to make this happen. The only thing resistance means is that your brain is functioning normally as you pursue something worthwhile.

So what do you do when one part of your brain resists the change another part of your brain desires? The instinctive approach is to try to force your way through resistance. You start thinking seriously about applying willpower and discipline to make the resisting part of you toe the line. Or you look for someone else to force you to make the change by joining a group or hiring an authority figure to tell you what to do. You might try to reason with yourself, as if resistance was just misguided logic. Or worst of all, you decide you've lost the war and surrender to your resistance, giving up on yourself and your dream.

None of these tactics will work. They will only increase the resistance and make you miserable in the

process. Even if you manage to give yourself a pep talk and ‘recommit’ yourself, you’ll only succeed in driving the resistance back underground. Making the resistance unconscious actually increases its power.



It’s not about willpower or discipline. It’s about neurology.

Instead, we need to recognize that resistance is a normal part of the change process. So you’re resistant. So what? When you acknowledge the role that resistance has to play, instead trying to eliminate it, you learn how to respond appropriately to it.

To respond appropriately to resistance, it helps to know this second significant fact about your brain: When we are stressed, an almond-shaped part of the brain called the amygdala seizes control from the cortex. Daniel Goldman, author of *Emotional Intelligence*, calls this an “amygdala hijacking,” when you move into old instinctual “fight or flight” responses.

Change is going to be stressful. So when you are frightened, anxious, angry or embarrassed, there is a good possibility that your amygdala will take control of your brain. Your commitment to the change comes from your cortex and, guess what, the cortex isn’t in charge any more. Your amygdala doesn’t care about the “new you.” Its only job is to keep you alive and the best way to do that is to rely on the old, tried-and-true instincts that have guided the human race for thousands and thousands of years. We call it resistance, as if we are willfully refusing to do what we know is good for us. But we’re simply following the direction of the amygdala. It’s not from lack of discipline or will. It’s our physiology.

What can you do about it? First of all, stop blaming yourself and learn how to move through the reality of resistance. There’s a four step method to do this, which we will discuss and apply in the Move Through Resistance workshop on January 31st (see page 3). This workshop explores what’s going on in your brain to cause resistance and which of the 6 common forms of resistance you tend to use. Armed with that knowledge, you can practice the 4 step method in class so that you can apply it the next time you really need it. If you can’t attend the workshop, give me a call and we’ll talk about how coaching can help you move through resistance.

## Play with Resistance

It’s a given that in a creative effort of any kind, an attitude of playfulness will take you farther than giving in to the ego’s desire to take yourself *seriously*. Seriousness is often a mask for fear and uncertainty. But remember what Deepak Chopra said in *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*, “Uncertainty is the fertile ground of pure creativity and freedom.”

So let’s play in our uncertainty by playing with resistance.

**Word Contest:** See how many words, of any length, you can make out of the letters in the word RESISTANCE.

I’ll award a **free copy** of the *Dancing in the Dragon’s Den Guided Imagery* CD to the two people with the most words. Just send your list of words to Rosanne@RosanneBane.com by February 1. Please no names or proper nouns, abbreviations, etc. (if the word is acceptable in Scrabble, it’s acceptable here). In honor of Groucho Marx, “if you say the secret word,” you get an extra 10 points.

**Metaphor Contest:** Answer these questions. If your resistance had a color, what color would it be? If your resistance made a sound, what sound would it make? If your resistance had a smell, what would it smell like? What shape would it be? What texture would it have? What taste? What size? If your resistance was an animal, what animal would it be? If your resistance was a historical figure, who would it be? If it was a plant, what kind of plant would it be?

Use the answers to some of these questions to spark either a written description or an illustration (as crude as stick figures or as elaborate as a Picassoesque drawing) of your resistance. Or create a combo of the two. Send a copy of the results to Rosanne@RosanneBane.com or PO Box 7063, Minneapolis, MN 55407-0063. I’ll award a **free copy** of the *Dancing in the Dragon’s Den Guided Imagery* CD to the two people with the most vivid and creative illustration and/or description.

*When you need motivation and information to recognize and redirect resistance, check out Rosanne’s coaching and speaking services at [www.RosanneBane.com](http://www.RosanneBane.com). Or call Rosanne at 612-722-4139!*



# Support and Tools to Keep You Moving To Your Goals!



## Move Through Resistance

January 31, 9:30 to 4:30

Now that you know resistance is normal, you can stop wasting energy beating yourself up about it. Use that energy to move through the resistance to make the creative changes you really want. This workshop will give you the tools and support you need to:

- ⊙ Find out what's going on in your brain that causes the feelings of resistance
- ⊙ Identify which of the 6 common forms of resistance you tend to experience
- ⊙ Learn and apply the 4 Step Method to move through resistance
- ⊙ Learn how to reduce the frequency, intensity and duration of the "amygdala hijackings" that give rise to resistance
- ⊙ Identify and commit to simple practices that will keep you moving through resistance!

**Location:** Open Book Building, Room 203, 1011 Washington Avenue, Minneapolis.

**Tuition:** Only \$75 for this all-day workshop. Bring a friend and you each save \$10.

**Register:** Online at [www.RosanneBane.com](http://www.RosanneBane.com) or call 612-722-4139.

## Resistant to Writing? Try these Loft classes!

**The Writing Habit:** Everyone has talent; what really makes a writer is the habit of writing. You can and will develop stronger writing habits.

**Writing Our Way Thru Shadow:** Discover how your shadow influences your writing and how to embrace your shadow and accept the gifts it always brings.

**Mastering the Writing Habit:** Bring your writing projects to completion with a practical 7 step process.

**Creative Cross Training:** Make your writing more fluid and powerful with creative play in non-verbal media like painting, mandalas, and collage.

**Classes start in February or March 2004. For more information or to register: call 612-379-8999 or visit [www.loft.org](http://www.loft.org).**

## Become a Change Master

Feb 3 - March 23, 6:45 - 9:00 pm

You don't have to take the Move Through Resistance workshop before signing up for this 8 week class, but it helps. We will apply the 7 Step Process of Creative Change to give you the tools, skills and support you need to:

- ⊙ Stop procrastinating and start living the life you want
- ⊙ Remove obstacles and take action to make your dreams reality
- ⊙ Discover where and why you're resistant to moving on and how to move through the resistance to achieve your goals
- ⊙ Develop habits that support your creativity and your personal and professional development
- ⊙ Honor your promises to yourself and live with integrity, authenticity and power!

**Location:** Hamline Park Plaza, Room 103B, 570 Asbury, St. Paul.

**Tuition:** Self-determined based on what value you receive from the class.

**Register:** Online at [www.RosanneBane.com](http://www.RosanneBane.com) or call 612-722-4139.

## Advanced Shadow class coming this spring!

### Deeper into the Dragon's Den!

When you have a basic understanding of what shadow is and how vital it is to the full expression of your creativity, this class will show you how to find:

- ⊙ Creative breakthroughs and expansion
- ⊙ Deeper access to your creativity and shadow on many meaningful levels
- ⊙ The willingness to surrender your ego when you need to
- ⊙ Intense joy and creative bliss!

**Tuesdays, March 30 thru May 18, 2004, 6:45 to 9 pm**

**Register:** Online at [www.RosanneBane.com](http://www.RosanneBane.com) or call 612-722-4139.