

# The Elephant Analogy

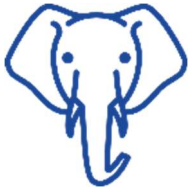
The Elephant Analogy explains the root causes of most change resistance. Three things must happen to change behavior for a change:



**1. Direct the Rider (Make the destination clear)**

The rider likes to contemplate and analyze information before deciding on a direction. When a rider isn't exactly sure which direction to go, they lead the elephant in circles.

**(What may look like resistance could actually be a lack of clarity).**



**2. Motivate the Elephant (Make people feel the need for change)**

When an individual's Elephant is not in agreement with the direction their Rider wants to go, the Rider will lose. The Rider may get their way temporarily through self-control, but the Elephant will always win since self-control is a limited resource. Motivation provides the energy and a lack of energy may doom a change effort.

**(What may look like resistance could actually be exhaustion).**



**3. Shape the path (Make required changes specific)**

To direct the Rider and motivate the Elephant, shape the path by focusing the situation, including the surrounding environment. Being specific, narrows the focus so the Elephant and the Rider are more likely to stay traveling together toward the goal.

**(What may look like resistance could actually be a lack of direction).**

*Heath, Chip, and Dan Heath. Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard. Thorndike Press, 2011*