

## HANDOUT 8.1

# Telling Clients What to Do

When the *WHY* is clear, the *HOW* is easy.  
—ANONYMOUS

If you're working as a health coach within the medical model, there may be times when clients will say to you or to their referring medical provider, "I don't need a coach; just tell me what to do." The referring practitioner may ask you to step in and become the wellness educator. In my experience, it's possible to do both coaching and client education in an MI-consistent way. We can share health information while providing coaching support, and we use the ask–offer–ask method to do this.

In the beginning, clients may feel motivated by short-term enthusiasm, excitement, and hope for improvement. They may experience the "high of change," which can provide the momentum to propel them forward. However, that does not negate the need to explore their motivations, visions, dreams, and "whys" for making a change. By unearthing clients' *whys*, they will be further empowered when tempted by life to stray from their journey of healthy choices.

Along the healing journey, clients may encounter pitfalls and temptations to return to their familiar habits and behaviors. This is why they need a coach throughout their entire journey toward wellness. The coach can support them in transforming their new habits into more permanent lifestyle changes.

The bottom line is, many people need education and information in the coaching process to make a shift from knowing to doing and finally to sustaining newly formed habits.