

# They Just, DON'T get it!



Changing resistance  
into understanding

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Illustrations by Ben Dewey

By the coauthor of the best sellers  
*Beans* and *301 Ways to Have Fun at Work*

An Excerpt From

*The Just Don't Get It:  
Changing Resistance Into Understanding*

by Leslie Yerkes and Randy Martin  
Published by Berrett-Koehler Publishers

# Contents

x	Preface
xiii	Acknowledgments
3	PART ONE: Pulling Apart
43	PART TWO: Gaining Understanding
77	PART THREE: Pulling Together
117	PART FOUR: Learning to Understand
124	The Keys
134	Application of The Keys
135	Get It! Continuum
136	Reflection and Dialogue Questions

# Preface

*THEY JUST DON'T GET IT!* is about those times when you're trying to tell someone something and they just don't get it, and what you need to do to transform their resistance into understanding.

If that sounds familiar, it should. Study after study shows us that the two most common problems in business are communication and resistance to change. In other words, *most* issues and problems in nearly *every* organization come down to the same thing: They just don't get it!

Typically, each of us looks at this situation as the other person's failing. We wonder—both silently and aloud—why they don't get it, why our brilliant explanations fall on apparently deaf ears. “I don't get it when they don't get it” is a song we sing, by ourselves and in a chorus with others. And each of us has been on the receiving end ourselves, having that song sung to us because we clearly weren't getting it.

In our role as change management consultants, we have observed thousands of leaders, managers, entrepreneurs, parents, and vested individuals dance the “I don't get it when they don't get it” tango. *They Just Don't Get It* puts this real-life situation up for discussion using the parable format, illustrated with fun, clever line drawings by Ben Dewey.

*They Just Don't Get It* gives owners, entrepreneurs, and managers insight into the reason their ideas don't get accomplished in the manner they expect; provides behavioral suggestions that help achieve goals in the future; and allows each of us to become aware of our personal responsibility in helping others understand our intentions.

Changing resistance into understanding is a conscious decision that is more about us than it is about them. When we focus only on them, we perpetuate the push-pull struggle. And so long as we are self-righteous, we will be met with resistance.

When it seems like they are not getting it, it is our responsibility to look at ourselves and our approach in a different light, suspend our judgment on their inability to understand, and look at the situation as an opportunity to grow, stretch, learn, and teach. Once we discover how best to engage them with the information, we need to believe passionately that they will be able to get it and succeed.

*They Just Don't Get It* is a story about changing from not getting it to really getting it. It's a unique opportunity to understand the root source of resistance and how, with enlightened awareness on our part, to overcome and prevent resistance in the future.

*They Just Don't Get It* provides the reader with personal insight into how to become a better communicator of ideas and an inspired motivator of people, both personally and professionally.

*They Just Don't Get It* helps each of us see that when they don't get it, the solution is really with us. As Pogo once said, "We have met the enemy and he is us."

So get comfortable, remove those distractions that might not let you focus on what you're reading, and get ready for a story that just might be more about you than it is about them.



# Part One

Pulling  
Apart



# Chapter One 1

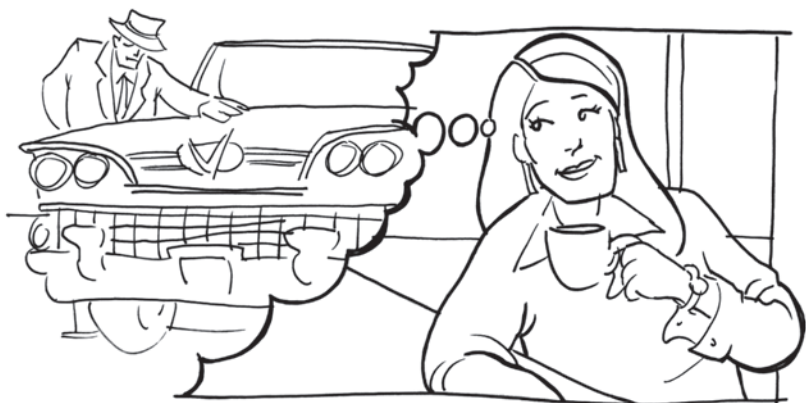
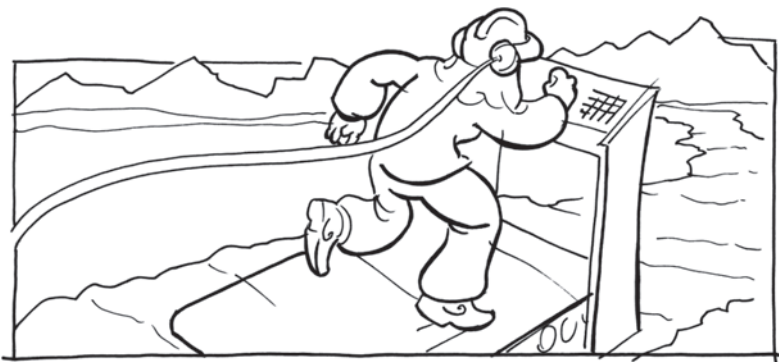
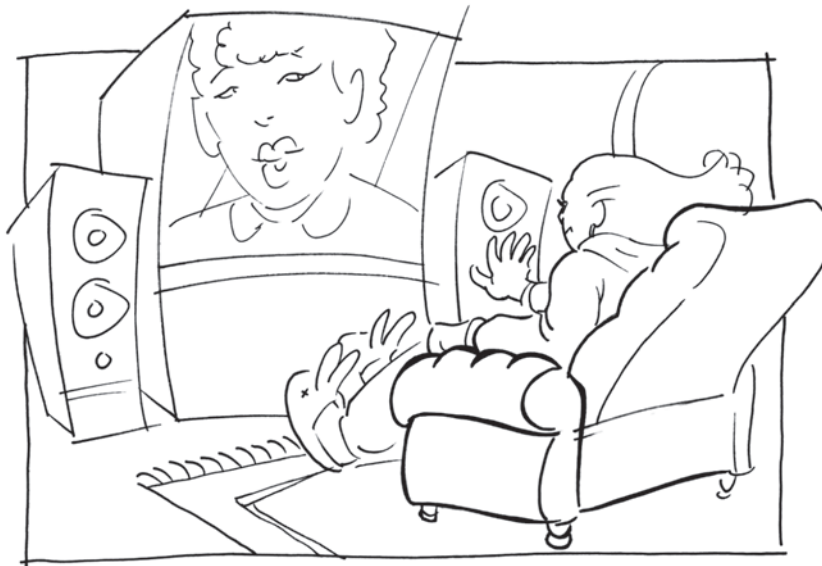


There once was a woman named Julie who lived in the very best apartment atop the very best building in the very best city in America.

Julie's apartment was filled with the very best things she could buy.

She owned a top-of-the-line high definition television set with theater surround sound, a treadmill with automatic memory and thirty-five presets of the most famous terrain in the world, and a chrome espresso machine that her father said reminded him of the '58 Buick he used to own.





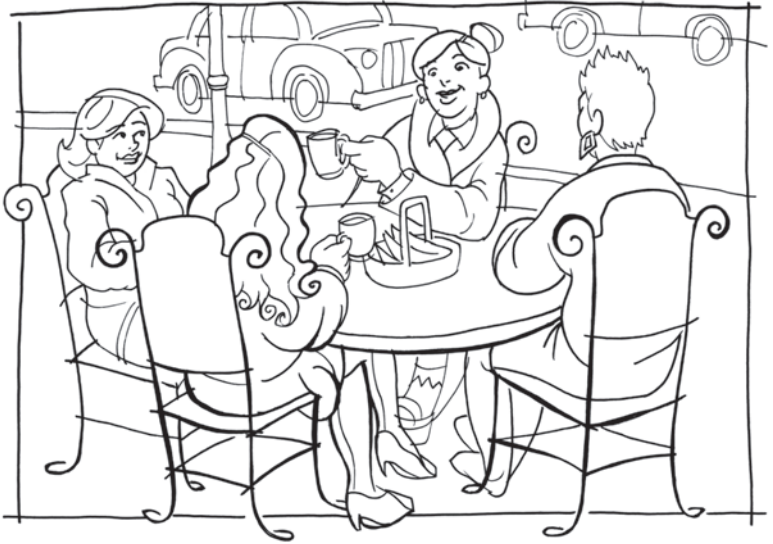


Julie had the very best job anyone could imagine. She was the senior vice president and chief account executive for the very best advertising agency in town.

She had the very best clients and produced the very best advertising in America.

Everything that Julie did was superb; everything she owned was better; every idea she had was the very best. In short, Julie got it.

All her friends said so. They said things to each other like, “You know why Julie does so well? It’s simple. Julie gets it.”





Which is why this morning was so troubling to Julie.

Julie wasn't interested in watching television. She wasn't interested in making espresso.

And she certainly wasn't interested in running up the side of Mount Kilimanjaro, although she could have.

And she wasn't interested in doing all these very best things because her head hurt.

Julie's head had hurt since she woke up two hours before. Before her alarm even went off.

Julie woke with a headache caused by a question that had been bouncing around in her brain all night long while she tried to sleep.

She had this awful, annoying question because for the first time in her life, Julie had come face-to-face with something she didn't get.

It was a simple question. One that all of us ask, all the time, of far too many people, far too often.

It's a question that causes us to lose sleep. And to not understand. And to not finish projects. And to lose friends.

And, although it really is a simple question to ask, it's one of the most difficult ones in the world to answer.

So what is this simple but profound question? The question that was bouncing around in Julie's head?

Here it is.

This is it.

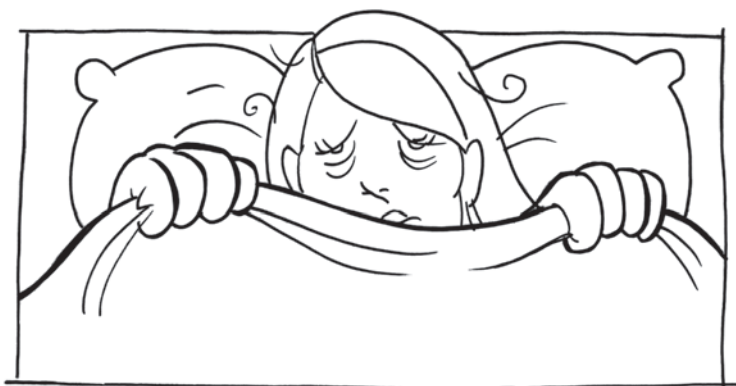
This is the question:

# Why don't they get it?





# Chapter Two 2



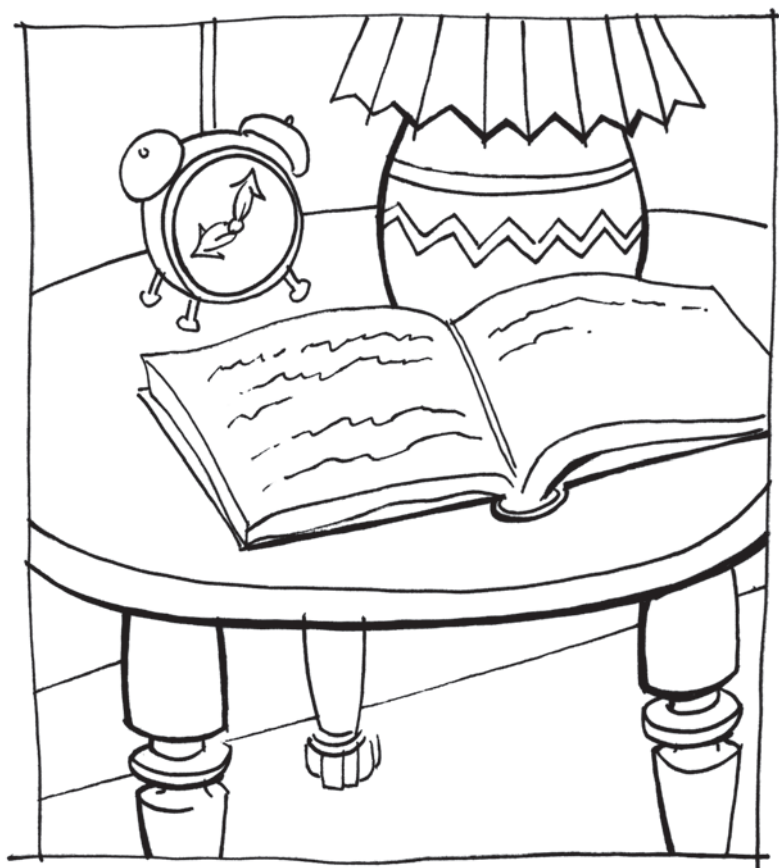
Julie's head hurt. It hurt so bad that she did something she had never done before in her life: She called in sick and climbed back into bed.



*When did this pain first begin?* she wondered, as she rolled her pillow into a ball and pulled her very best linen comforter over her head. *Was it last night, or did it start sometime even sooner?*

*Maybe my journal will have the answer!* she thought. She reached over to the nightstand, pulled the journal to her, and started to read what she'd written the last several days.

And there was her answer . . . in her own handwriting.





Of course! It *was* yesterday! During The Doodley Sauerkraut Company presentation.

She had just gone through all the elements of the new campaign and was finishing up with the TV spot about the alligator eating a Reuben sandwich without the Russian dressing when Doodley's president, J. Worthington Swag, said, "I just don't get it, Julie. I thought this was supposed to be funny!"

“What do you mean, you don’t get it?” she had said, shocked not only at the question but that anyone wouldn’t understand the obvious symbolism.

“The alligator loves your sauerkraut so much he doesn’t want to spoil it with the dressing! It’s hysterical!”

“But why an alligator?”

“Because alligators are funny!” she’d told him, her voice climbing a few pitches toward high C.

“Look at Wally Gator! A laugh-a-minute!”

“I didn’t care for him either,” JW replied without even a smile.

But why an alligator?





“ I just don’t get what’s funny about alligators. Do alligators eat corned beef?”

“Who cares?”

“Can they hold a sandwich in their claws? And even if they could hold it, could they reach their mouth with it? I just don’t get it!”



That's where it had started, all right.

With J. Worthington Swag.

What was wrong with clients like him? Why didn't they get it?

The alligator gambit was so obvious, and hilariously funny.

Why was old JW so clueless?



Though, to be honest, it wasn't just JW who didn't get it. John, her assistant, wasn't sure alligators were funny either.

Now that she thought about it, she hadn't really been able to get John on board from the beginning. Nothing she had told him seemed to convince him or even make him understand.



Maybe she needed to rethink John's role in the creative group.

And Mary Sue, too!

As the head writer on the campaign, Mary Sue wanted to make the lead character a koala bear, for heaven's sake!

Talk about not getting it!

Koala bears aren't funny! They're cuddly!

They only eat eucalyptus leaves and *no one* puts sauerkraut on eucalyptus leaves!

*What was wrong with these people, Julie*  
thought. Why don't they get it?

I DON'T GET IT WHEN THEY DON'T  
GET IT!

Julie was having a hard time with this simple question. All this thinking was making her head hurt.

She was confused, and it was all *their* fault!

So she did what she always did in tough times like this.

She rolled over and went back to sleep.



this material has been excerpted from

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