

Don't be *that* Dietitian

AVOIDING THE BIGGEST CLIENT CONNECTION FAILS

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Hi! I'm Joyce

(Technically, Dr. Joyce Faraj-Ardura)

I love my café con leche, dark chocolate from Aldi's and having me-time in my hammock.

I'm the founder of the Nutrition Counseling Academy and private practice owner (Joyceful Nutrition). Member of MINT. Former tenure track professor.

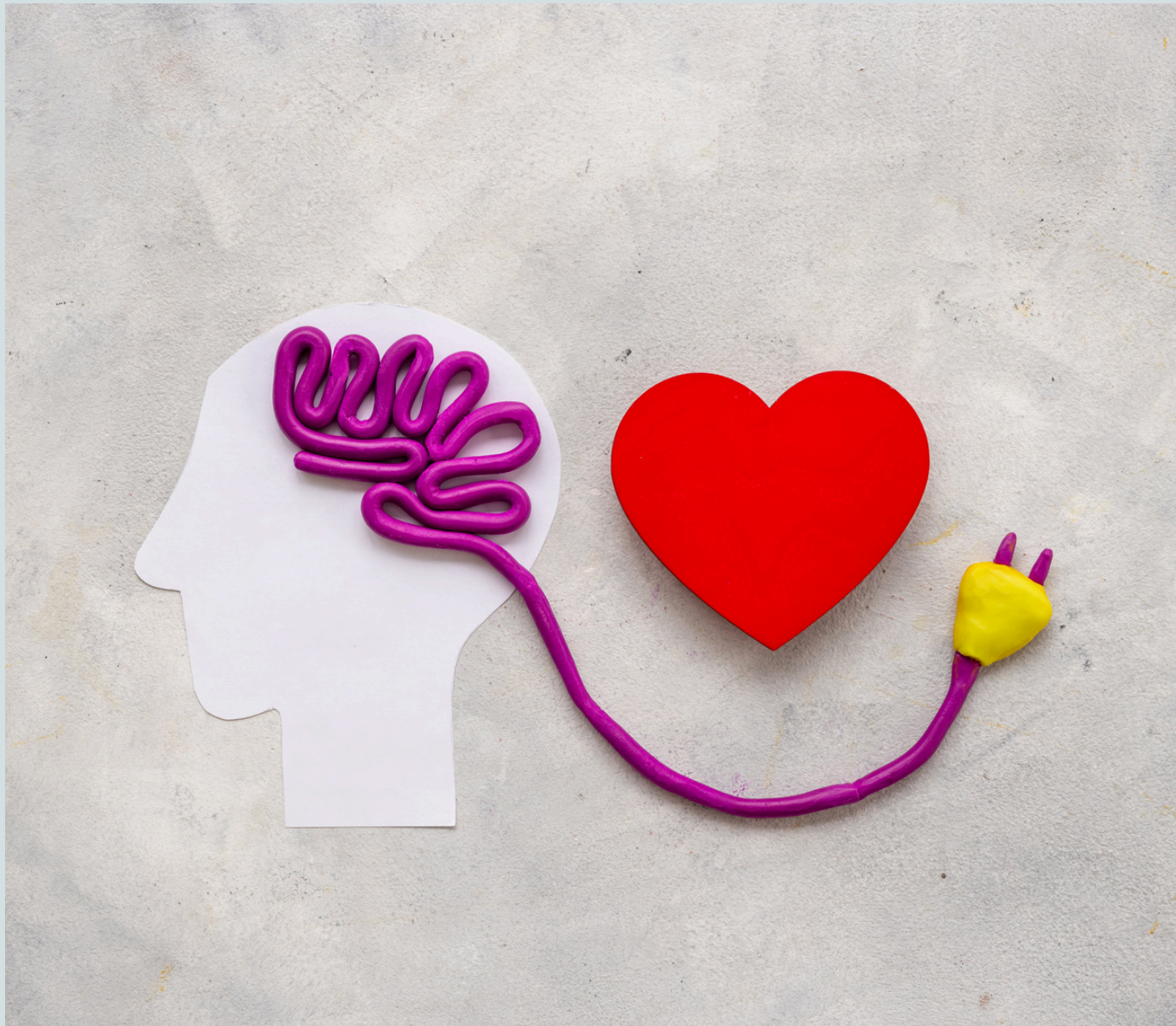
I do consulting work, public speaking, and create what I believe the world needs more of!

YOU'RE IN THE RIGHT PLACE IF...

- ✓ You know there is something missing in your nutrition sessions/consults and are wondering what that might be...
- ✓ You have an amazing first session -but then you realize you're doing most of the talking - giving clients lots of interventions
- ✓ Find that clients disengage mid-session and are losing motivation [in front of your eyes]
- ✓ You feel like you're working more than your clients and burning out...



Our Plan Today



The Difference between Nutrition Education and Nutrition Counseling

The Top Mistakes Costing us Connecting (and how to avoid them)

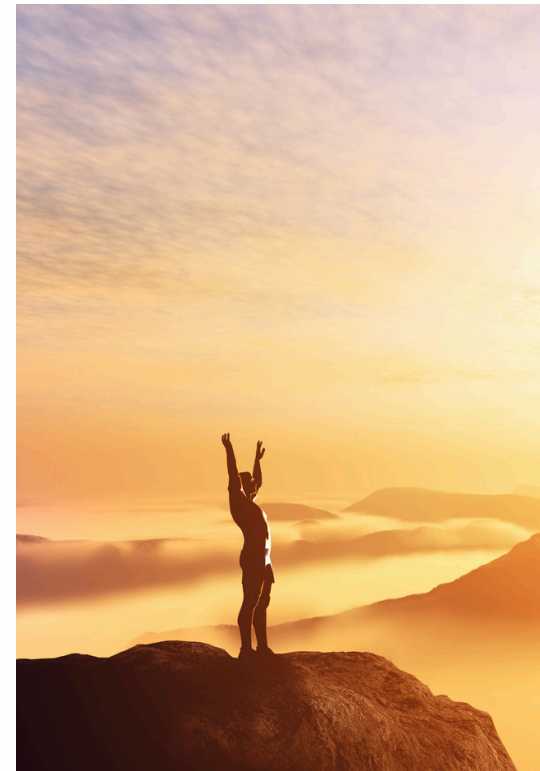
The Biggest Predictor of Positive Client Outcomes (it may not be what you think!)

How to Become a Rockstar RD (and avoid being *THAT* RD).

BY THE END OF TODAY YOU'LL



Be able to identify the key difference between education and counseling



List the biggest predictor of positive client outcomes



Assess how many of the top mistakes you may be making in session



Take 3 strategies you can use in session to engage your clients more genuinely

DOES THIS RESONATE?

“I often feel that sessions are going well, I provide so much value and clients leave with a plan, but they fail to follow through”

“I often feel that I’m working harder than my clients, doing extra research and convincing them of why they need to make dietary changes”

“I am an expert in all the MNT/nutrition science but this is not translating into action or behavior change in my clients”

“I make it a point to focus on nutrition education in session so clients know that I’m “worth” it”

TOP MISTAKES COSTING YOU CLIENTS

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Over-Educating vs Counseling

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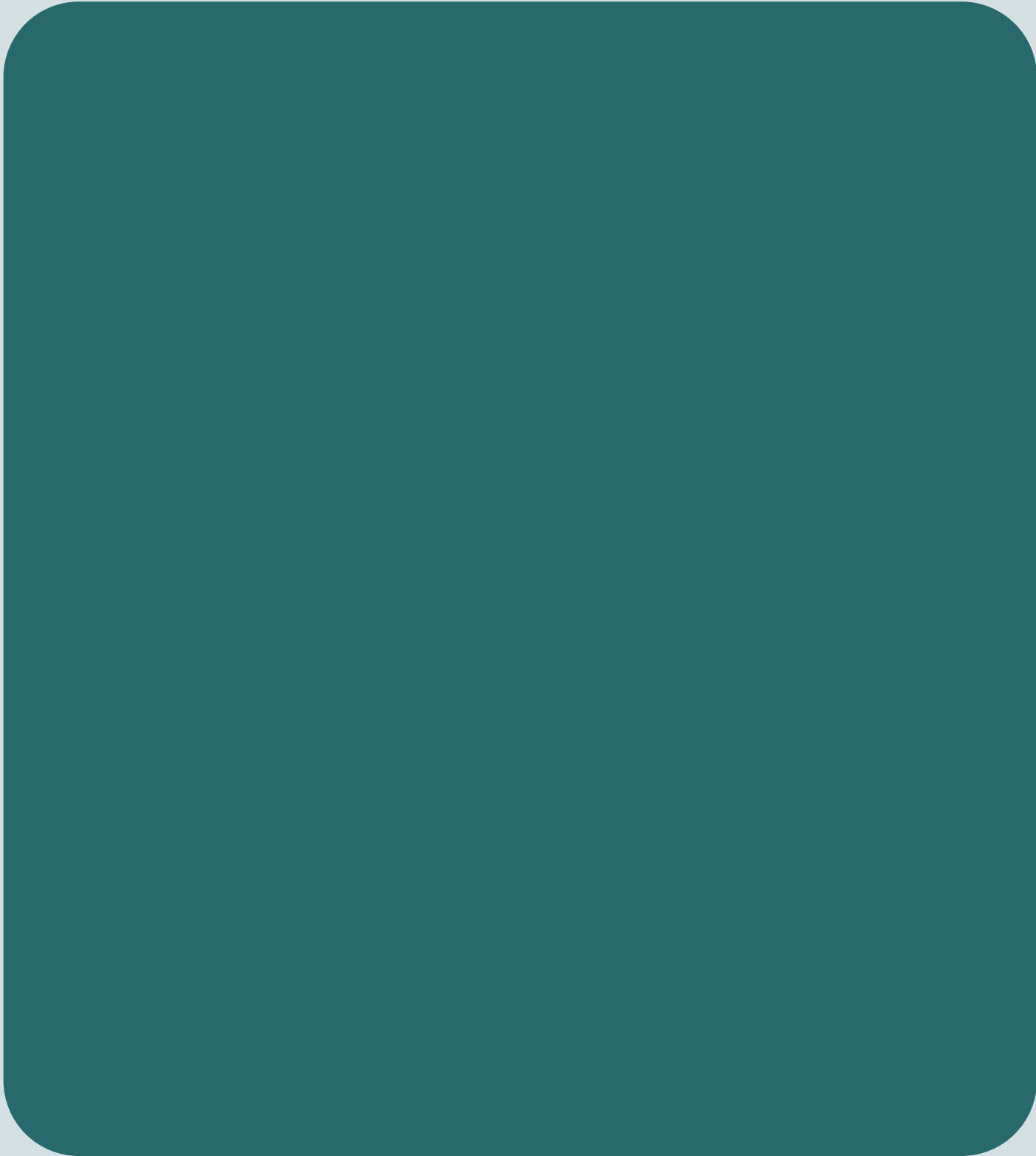


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NUTRITION

COUNSELING VS EDUCATION

- Collaborative relationship

- Work together to establish food, nutrition and physical activity priorities, goals, and action plans

- Conversations acknowledge and foster responsibility for self-care to treat an existing condition and/or promote health

- Coaching tends to focus on present/future (deeper conversations dig into past too)

- Formal process to instruct or train a client in a skill or knowledge

- Assumes that knowledge leads to behavior change

- Complementary to nutrition counseling (but not to be used exclusively)

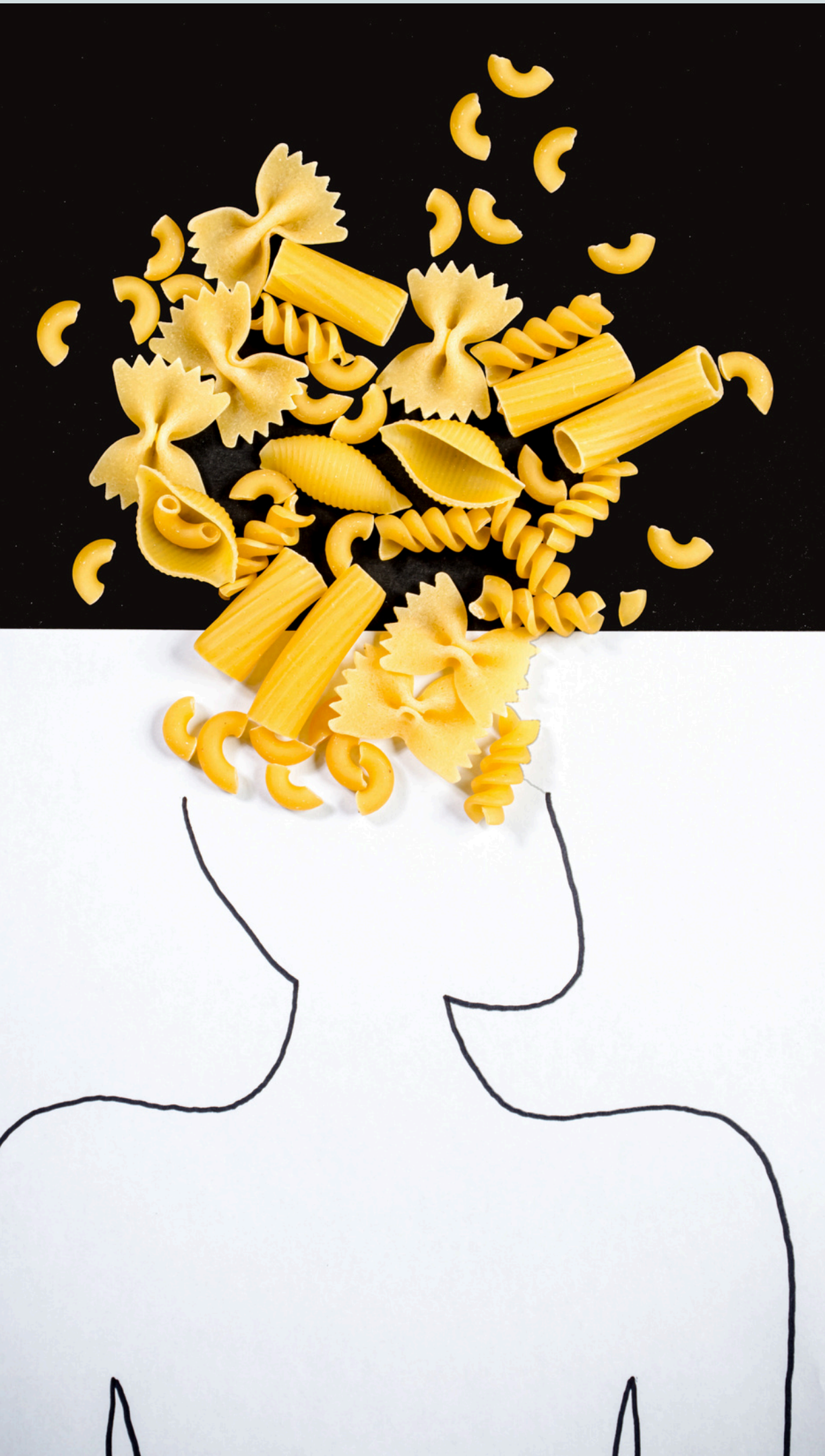
- What dietitians & nutrition professionals end up doing in session *most* of the time

Knowledge \neq Change



Even though education is a necessary component of behavior change, knowledge does not guarantee people will change their behaviors.

(Arlinghouse & Johnson, 2018)



**Because Nutrition
is a Science, but
Eating is a Behavior**

BIG SHIFT IN YOUR PERSPECTIVE

I am not just a nutrition educator.

**I am a nutrition therapist and
behavior change coach.**

I support my client's behavior change so that they can integrate the evidence-based MNT strategies that will help them reach their outcomes.

Facts

94%

of Dietitians state that additional training on communication skills for facilitating behavior change is

NECESSARY

(Whitehead & Parkin, 2022)



It's NOT your fault

"Although the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends that RDs incorporate proven counseling methods, such as MI, to help clients facilitate desired behavior change, we're not always given enough opportunity to learn, practice and master such skills in our training."

Tewksbury, C., Nwankwo, R., & Peterson, J. (2022)

My Take:

*"The communication skills
you have to help your clients
navigate behavior change
are just as important
as the nutrition knowledge you
have to support support the
changes."*

-JOYCE FARAJ-ARDURA



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Falling Into the Righting Reflex

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The Righting Reflex

Comes from a good place, but is the biggest issue I see!

It's basically telling people what to do.

Can you see a problem with this?

The Righting Reflex

It is well-meaning and it usually starts with:

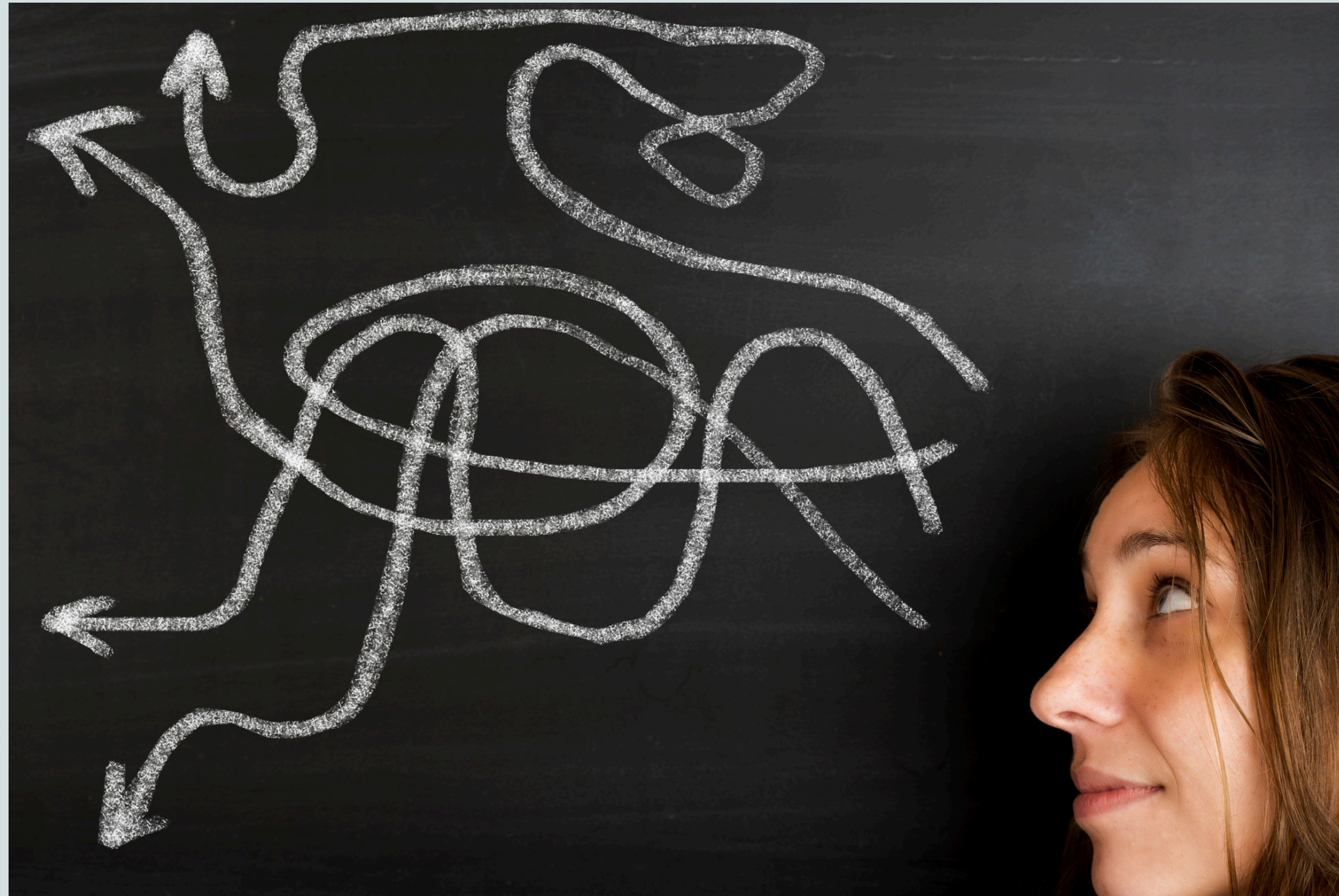
“Have you thought about...?”

“You should...”

“You need to....”

“Why don’t you....?”

The Righting Reflex



The Righting Reflex

Instead of jumping in, recognize the desire to tell your client what to do and first:

Ask-Provide -Ask:

Ask them what they have already thought of/about when it comes to
[intervention for their health]

Hear them out and affirm their efforts.

AND/OR

Ask for permission (unless they have asked you already) to share strategies

“Is it okay if I share some strategies that have helped others who are also dealing with xyz?”

Provide your suggestions + Ask them what they think about that.

“Which - if any- sounds like a strategy you’d like to try?”

The Righting Reflex

Instead of jumping in, recognize the desire to tell your client what to do and first:

Ask-Provide -Ask:

Why it works:

Emphasizes AUTONOMY (ask for permission, which, if any..)

Gives options (brains like options)

Asks them to take the lead as the experts of their own life (collaboration)

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Not Having Structure in Session

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Lacking Structure

Clients want to share it all!

Instead, share your process with them [Initial]:

First, I'll ask you some questions to get an idea of where you're at and what you're struggling with;

Then we'll dive into your nutrition story and what's worked, what hasn't worked;

-assess behaviors and attitudes towards change-

Then we'll discuss what you can expect from working together and we can dive into next steps and build a roadmap for our work together.

How does that sound?

Lacking Structure

Instead, share your process with them [follow-up]:

First, we will go into what has been working for you, where you might be struggling, and either dive deeper into brainstorming solutions or discuss next steps on our roadmap.

Lacking Structure

Typically you can have 4 types of conversations in a session:

Engaging (beginning or to build more rapport)

Focusing (on a target area)

Evoking (why did they chose that?)

Planning (assess barriers and coming up with a high confidence next step)

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Planning Trap

Many times we go from identifying the area of focus (e.g. nutrition problem) and go straight into planning.

What's wrong with that?

You might have a client with a great action plan and no motivation, no discussion of barriers, low self-efficacy, low confidence, and we might be setting them up to fail.

Even worse, we may be the ones choosing their goals and interventions, and not them!

Planning Trap

However, on the other end- if you spend too much time evoking motivation- you might actually decrease your client's momentum towards change!

So learning to dance with your clients at their pace, meet them where they are at, and adjust as necessary will be key!



TOP MISTAKES COSTING YOU CLIENTS

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Failing to Establish a Strong
Therapeutic Relationship

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Therapeutic Relationship

When we focus on us, our expertise, showing off what we know, we alienate the client. They want to know we can help them, but most importantly, they want to know if:

They can trust us

This is a safe space without judgment

They will have any of their freedoms taken away

They can actually do this

Therapeutic Relationship

This is the NUMBER 1 predictor of positive client outcomes (in psychotherapy).

**We often feel the desire to show off our expertise,
and prioritize education over connection.**

Connection is what will keep your clients engaged, and the best way to establish strong rapport is by...



HEARD/ SEEN

Reflections
Genuine interest
Empathy



VALUED

Actively engaging them
Asking for their input and
thoughts
Emphasizing their
autonomy



EMPOWERED

Using affirmations and
discussing their
strengths, skills, abilities
to increase self-efficacy



IT COMES DOWN TO THIS:

“People will forget what
you said, people will forget
what you did, but people
will never forget how you
made them feel”

–Maya Angelou

What we're taught to focus on (following NCP)

You go into the session ready to do a nutrition assessment, eager to determine the nutrition problem, identify the highest priority nutrition intervention(s), provide nutrition education, and go into planning interventions (given by you) and setting up SMART goals.

What we need to focus on (for client retention + change)

You go into the session ready to prioritize connecting with their client/patient, exploring what drives their desire/need to meet with you, assess their attitudes towards behavior change, help the patient find an intervention that they're ready/willing/able to work on, evoke intrinsic motivation [as needed] and collaborate on how they will reach their high-confidence goals, while emphasizing their autonomy and empowering them to believe that change is possible.

TOP MISTAKES COSTING YOU CLIENTS

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Over-Educating vs Counseling

Not Managing Expectations

6

2

Falling Into the Righting Reflex

Inappropriate Goal Setting Process

7

3

Not Having Structure in Session

Ignoring the Stages of Change

8

4

Jumping into Planning

Not Exploring Attitudes, Beliefs and Barriers

9

5

Failing to Establish a Strong
Therapeutic Relationship

Working harder than your client

10

How to Elevate Your Behavior Change Coaching Skills

You have a roadmap of things to avoid, so the first step is to gain awareness.

Which of the top mistakes might you be making?

How could you change ONE thing at a time?

Try it out, and reflect on what you noticed.

Practice and then try another thing out.

One skill at a time. Then get support, mentorship, or guidance as needed.

Let's Connect!

Website: www.nutritioncounselingacademy.com

Instagram: [@Nutrition.Counseling.Academy](https://www.instagram.com/Nutrition.Counseling.Academy)

Facebook: [Nutrition Counseling & Coaching for
Dietitians & Nutrition Professionals](https://www.facebook.com/Nutrition.Counseling.&Coaching.for.Dietitians.&Nutrition.Professionals)

Email: Joyce@nutritioncounselingacademy.com

**Freebie: nutritioncounselingacademy.com/values
(enter code: DIFN through Dec 31st)**



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