

# Cues that Count!

*By Zoey Trap, MSc*

Communication is an essential skill for all Pilates instructors. We must communicate, or *sell*, Pilates as well as our role as instructors. Among essential communication we must commit to, instructors have to intake clients to learn about them and establish goals and then work to build rapport to retain those clients. Yet, if you think of a typical client interaction during the Pilates session time, most communication falls into the category of **cueing**.

Good cues do many things:

- Educate
- De-mystify the movement
- Help improve the ability to work with all the Principles and Key Concepts
- Build awareness
- Improve movement quality
- Address the priorities in a student's body
- Ingrain healthy movement patterns
- Relate to the client's goals and needs
- Inspire and motivate

Cues do all that – and more! Cueing is something every instructor is introduced to in the early days of learning to teach. They learn about verbal and non-verbal communication, they discover how to get and keep an exercise in motion, how to cue in the positive, how to pace cues.... As instructors progress on the pathway, they take lessons and attend workshops that further develop and inspire their teaching. But there can be so much more.

To develop great cues, it is important to know:

1. Who you are as a teacher (We are all different.)

2. Who your client is and what resonates for them.
3. What you are wanting to express: for example, direction, correction, movement quality, etc.

These three elements combine to inform and allow for the development and use of cues that really count – cues that honor your personality, your student's learning styles, personalities and goals, and also aide in progression.

Over the 25 years that I have been teaching Pilates, I have built a reputation for clear and creative cueing. I never really thought about cueing, it was something that came naturally to me. A question I was asked during a workshop sparked my critical thinking. It was, "How do I create my cues?" During my life, I studied a variety of movement disciplines: gymnastics, yoga, dance, Spiraldynamik®, Hellerwork®, Somatics, and Qigong – and of course, Pilates. When I teach, I draw from all those disciplines to create cues in the moment. When I hit on a great cue that has huge impact, I might try it on others. If it 'lands,' I know it has broad appeal. If it doesn't, I keep it for that private client.

When I did my MSc in Exercise Science, I fell in love all over again with anatomy, kinesiology, and science, but it negatively impacted my cueing as I lost my simplicity for a while. Luckily, I received feedback that put me back on course. The feedback was: "Your clients don't really know what you are saying!" Ouch! So I worked to refocus and to use words that were simple and made sense. I also did more study on and incorporated more use of imagery. Now I realize that cueing is both an art and a science. The science is knowing what you are after – reflecting a blend of the exercise technique and the structure in front of you; while the art incorporates understanding the student's personality, learning style, and goal as well as using images and descriptors that bring more of the senses to the experience.

Join me **July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 2:00-4:00 pm EST** (New York) for a

virtual CEC “**How Can I Cue You: Let Me Count the Ways**” to learn my secrets! Earn 2 Peak Pilates Credits and gain a whole new way to approach directional and descriptive cues as well as specifics for virtual teaching! Learn how to create cues that really make a difference and reflect your style and your student’s needs. If you can’t make it – register and send an email to Zoey ([zoeytrap@gmail.com](mailto:zoeytrap@gmail.com)) to receive a recording.

**[REGISTER HERE!](#)**

### **TESTIMONIALS:**

*One of the many reasons I enjoy my sessions with Zoey is her ability to instruct me through exercises I have performed for years, yet help me feel them in a way I’ve never before experienced. Enhancing my critical connections (in particular heel-to-seat and rib-to-scapula) is my primary focus. Zoey is gifted in the art of cueing and the manner in which she employs cues, and I am a grateful beneficiary!*

–Julia Hughes

*Zoey’s cues put lightbulbs in my body!*

–Jen Harold

*I always understand what she means and what to do. She helps me understand my body and how to connect better to my core.*

–Paul Goldstein

*I really enjoy taking sessions with Zoey because her cueing helps me understand and visualize the exercises in my body. She is able to use imagery cues that help me make stronger connections within my body and has helped me eliminate the*

*pain I was having in my hips.*

–Sammi Sappington