LISA SIMPKINSON · VILLAGE PILATES

Cues to Retire

The cues we say on autopilot, what they're doing to your client, and what to say instead.

We all inherited a stack of cues from our training and never stopped to question them. Most of them make the client grip, brace, or vanish into her own head. Here are the ones I've retired, and what I say now. Teach one this week and tell me what shifts.

Retire this	What it's actually doing	Say this instead
"Belly button to spine"	She grips into her obliques and braces instead of moving.	"Ribs to hips. Length from head to tail."
"Engage your core"	She drops into her head, braces, and holds her breath.	"Breathe out fully and let the core answer the load."
"Shoulders down"	She jams the blades down and loses all the length through the spine.	"Lengthen the back of your neck, and feel broad across your shoulders."
"Chin to chest"	She yanks the head forward and the neck does the work the abs should.	"Nod the chin a centimetre and peel up from the sternum."
Counting reps out loud	She races you to the number and checks out of her own body.	"Go quiet. Cue what you see. End the set when the quality goes, not the count."
"Squeeze your glutes"	She braces through her hips, limiting the natural function of her pelvic floor.	"Drive through your heels and let the glutes naturally support the movement."

THE PATTERN UNDER ALL OF THEM

Stop cueing a position. Start cueing a feeling. The shape sorts itself out. That's what Joseph Pilates meant when he called it Contrology, and it's the part the cert skipped.

If year five went quiet for you, and you know there's a layer your training never gave you, that's the thing I'm building next. Stay tuned...