

How to Ask for (and Get) Everything You Want by Mark Victor Hansen

6 strategies to overcome the obstacles of requests.

The best way of getting what you want is thinking about your request before you actually make it.

The big reason many people fail to get what they want is that they are too afraid to ask or they view their requests as all-or-nothing gambits—instead of a series of negotiations and compromises.

But there is a middle ground. Here are strategies to help you begin the “asking” process and avoid becoming upset if things don’t go exactly as planned.

Steps to Success

1. Tell yourself there is nothing to fear except fear itself. Fear of punishment or rejection is why most people hesitate to ask for what they want. They are afraid that going out on an emotional limb will result in humiliation if they fail.

Strategy: Before making your request, take plenty of time to remind yourself of the importance of what you are asking for. Tell yourself the only thing that matters is whether or not you are making good and well-articulated points. By focusing on the merits of your request, not on how you will appear to others, many of your initial fears will fade away.

2. Before you try to sell others, sell yourself. Two of the most important elements involved in asking for what you want—and-getting it—are self-confidence and determination. Unless you believe in your heart that you will eventually win over the other side, you will likely falter or become troubled at the first sign of resistance.

Strategy: An extreme emotional reaction to any hurdle will almost certainly doom your mission, causing the other side to take you and your points less seriously.

Tell yourself from the outset that you may not immediately get what you want. The statement is not the same as saying that you will never succeed, which could hurt your morale and determination. Instead, you are merely facing reality—accepting the fact that you may face a setback. By acknowledging this possibility, you will not be surprised or upset if you are turned down.

3. Organize your thoughts. You can’t expect to get the results you want if the other side doesn’t understand your request.

Strategy: Write out exactly what you want. Then redraft your points until your reasoning is clear, ordered and can be easily related. Practice in front of a mirror, or discuss the points with friends to be sure they make sense and you didn’t leave anything out.

4. When you ask, ask from your heart. Important requests are always better received when those making them are passionate, friendly, polite and firm. Such a stance is difficult to resist. It increases your odds of success... or at least minimizes the chance that your personality or attitude will sabotage your request.

Strategy: Ask in an enthusiastic manner and voice. Maintain steady eye contact to show that you mean business, but also exhibit respect and admiration for the person to whom you are speaking. In general, you

stand a much better chance of getting what you want when you make people feel at ease and show them that you are truly excited about what you are requesting.

5. Prepare to deal with resistance. Even if you do everything right, you might still meet resistance. The person you are asking might want to confer with someone else before he/she makes a final decision... or he may want to table his answer, hoping that you'll retreat from your position once you have had some time to think about it... or he might just say no.

Strategy: If someone resists or challenges your request, be polite and gracious. Do not lose your temper or become discouraged. Instead of seeing the other person's resistance as a dead end, view it as part of a continuing conversation. Translate every no into a next. Realize a no doesn't mean stop—it simply means not yet.

6. Learn the art of saying thank you. Whether or not you get what you want, say thank you. Gratitude will leave the other person open to giving you what you want—or more of what you want—sometime in the future.

Strategy: Say thank you directly to the person and follow up with a written note. In some cases, flowers or a gift may be appropriate.

Learning the art of expressing gratitude will force you to focus on the positive. It will also keep you from holding a grudge, which is difficult to hide and only works against you in the long run.