



## Ask for What You Want

by Kathie Hightower  
Wordcount: 692

A few years ago a friend of mine, Gail Howerton, coordinated a trip to Nepal. Another friend, Kris, really wanted to go, but she had just started a new job and knew that her boss wouldn't let her take a two-week leave so soon.

"Why does it all have to come at once," she complained to her husband. "Why couldn't the job be starting after the trip instead of right now?" At some point, he got tired of listening to her and passed on these words of wisdom.

"Here you are complaining because your boss won't let you go," he said, "and you haven't even asked him. Why don't you ask him before you complain?"

She did ask him and he happily granted her leave without pay. She got to start the job AND go to Nepal. Because she asked.

I keep Kris in mind whenever I really want something but I expect the answer will be no. It's amazing how often we decide what the other person's response will be without ever giving them the chance to speak. We'll never know how many opportunities we miss out on just because we don't ask.

There are important things to consider in asking for what you want.

- Be specific. If you tell me you are looking for a job, it would be hard for me to help out. But if you specifically say, "I'm looking for contacts in the hospitality industry in the DC area," I just might be able to give you the contacts you need.
- Be persistent. I heard a speaker talk about marketing who said, "Remember that you have to keep asking because 'No' often doesn't mean 'No.' It often just means 'No, not now.'" I've learned this in marketing my speaking and writing. I sent one query to the same publication every year for four years in a row. I knew it was a good article idea specifically targeted to the audience of that publication. The responses indicated that the timing just wasn't right, not that my idea was wrong for them. On the fourth try, the editor bought it. In the sales world they say that it takes eight sales call to make the sale. Keep asking.
- Get support to help you ask. This is why the Success Team or Mastermind group concept works so well. When you have a hard time asking for what you want, your support group can help you clarify it, help you practice asking, and sometimes even go along to lend moral support when you ask. They can provide the extra "kick in the pants" you need to force you to ask. Whenever I keep putting off asking for something I want, my group calls me on it.

For anyone who has trouble asking, I recommend the book *The Aladdin Factor*, by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen (Berkley Books). It's full of inspirational examples and tips and techniques. Read it and you can't help but be motivated to ask for what you really want. I kept underlining stories and writing notes in the margin as they reminded me of things I've wanted to ask for but didn't have the guts to. Reading the amazing results others have had gives you motivation to try for yourself.

I recently revisited the book by rereading some of the things I'd underlined. One tip struck me because I haven't been using it as much as I might.

That is to "ask as if you expect to get it." Expect a yes rather than a no and you very likely will manifest one. It certainly changes the way you ask — your word use and tone of voice and body language. All are factors that can impact the way you are perceived by the other person, which might just impact their decision. \

Can I tell you that you will always get what you ask for? Of course not. But I can predict what you will get if you fail to ask.

As one of my favorite speakers, Patricia Fripp, says, "Everything in life is a sales situation... and the answer is no if you don't ask."

©1998, Kathie Hightower