

# The Ask: Expanding Your Comfort Zone



## Mindset Matters

You don't have to be strong enough. He will strengthen you.  
*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13*

What keeps you from asking for what you need? What is the story you tell yourself that keeps you from bringing it up in conversation? List these thoughts in the left-hand column below. Identify empowering thoughts that replace your fears, concerns or hesitations. It's all a matter of perspective.

Fear / Concern	A New Perspective
I don't want to be a bother to anyone.	Friends are honored if you include them and feel left out when you don't ask. New donors like to know that their money is pooled with others to make a greater impact than they believe they could make on their own.
<p>The Conversation: <i>You may or may not know that I'm on the Catholic Education Foundation Board. I'm involved because.... Are you aware of the impact they're making? I'm inviting all of my friends to participate this year as it's an organization that truly impacts families who desire a faith-based Catholic education for their children but wouldn't otherwise be able to afford it. I don't want you to miss out as I know how much you value your Catholic faith. I don't want you to be mad at me for not including you.</i></p>	
I'm afraid that they'll think...	
The Conversation:	
Fear or Concern:	
The Conversation:	

# Tools to Expand Your Comfort Zone

## **The Habit of a Healthy Mindset**

Write three healthy mindset statements that increase your confidence to ask for what your organization needs. Read 2X a day for the next 30 days.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## **The Mindset Shift**

*-I can't even imagine myself speaking in front of a group effectively.*

*...yet!*

*-I'm not good at presentations. I'm not comfortable doing this.*

*...yet!*

*-I am a smart person – I have the ability to learn how to make presentations.*

*-If \_\_\_\_ can learn how to deliver effective presentations, I can learn how to do it.*

*-I can't be the only one who feels this way – how did others learn how to be comfortable making presentations?.*

*-I can visualize myself making effective presentations.*

*-It's not as bad as I thought it would be...*

*-The more I practice, the better I get at this.*

*-I'm actually comfortable doing this.*

*-I've got this! I can do it! It's fun and easy for me.*

## **Prayer**

*Trust in the Lord and invite Him into the conversation through prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to work through you for God's purpose. Trust Him.*

## **What if...**

*Use what if questions to challenge a fear or concern. What if I didn't have this limiting thought? What if I didn't have this fear? What if they are grateful that I included them? What if...*

## **Visualization – Mental Rehearsal**

*Visualize the conversation in detail with a successful outcome. What is ideal? Visualize a beautiful and engaging conversation. Visualize the person that you are talking to smiling and nodding. Visualize a grateful "yes" to your request. (Note: Developing a new relationship is a multi-step process. Visualize each conversation and interaction and make a friend for life.)*

## **Atta Girls / Atta Boys – Reflect on past successes to build your confidence.**

*Who has thanked you for including them? What experience did you fear and later realized those fears were unwarranted? When did you get an easy or quick "yes"? When did you get a "no" for now and a "yes" later? Make a list of these and other examples that excite you about asking.*

**Develop the Skill of Asking in an 8-week Negotiation Gym – Details in the book 'Ask For It' by Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever.**

# Negotiation Gym = 6 week set of practice exercises

The goal is to become comfortable by practicing simple asks for low risk items, recognizing your emotions when asking, being delighted with “Yes’s” when you weren’t expecting it, and recognizing that hearing the word “No” isn’t as personal as you make it. Source: Ask For It by Linda Babcock & Sara Laschever

## **Week 1 – Easy Warm-Ups – It starts with an ask!**

Let’s start off easy. Make it a game, an adventure, no risk. Notice all of the things you could negotiate/ask for all day long. Negotiate for one small thing with low stakes every single day. Don’t expect a yes, just get used to asking for something that you feel comfortable asking for. Ask for simple things that might be easy for others to give, that you are pretty sure you can get or that you’d like but won’t care much if you don’t get. Notice your emotions before, during and after the ask.

At home, negotiate for help around the house, mealtimes or menus.

From random people – ask for the current time, directions, recommendations in a store.

In retail locations, ask for any current discounts or coupons. In a restaurant, ask for a substitution.

With handymen, ask for a price break, to waive the service call, or for coupons or discounts.

At work, identify opportunities where you could ask for something – extended deadlines, participation on a committee, consideration for a project, someone’s opinion about a decision you’re considering, etc. Open your awareness to how many opportunities there are to ask for something in a normal day.

## **Week 2 – Stretch Out – Use the Giggle Test – Practice Counter Offers**

The goal this week is to stretch your comfort zone in asking. Practice by identifying small things that don’t really matter. Ask for twice as much as you think is possible. Try not to smirk or giggle. You might be surprised when you expected a “no” and got a “yes”. Practice making a counter-offer. Hold eye contact. Get comfortable with silence. For example: In retail locations, ask for 50¢ off an item and if no, ask for 20¢ or 10¢ cents. At home, ask someone to do a chore that you would typically do. If they hesitate, negotiate/ask them to help you with the chore. In a restaurant, ask for a sample of something (free of course).

At work, ask for something low risk or something that you wouldn’t typically ask for twice during the week. Continue to look for opportunities to ask for something that is important to you.

## **Week 3 – Play Out of Bounds**

The goal this week is to get comfortable with getting turned down. Learn to ask for something, get turned down and be okay with it. Reply without shame – “thanks for considering it” or “just thought I’d ask”. Pick something with low stakes that you are not likely to get. Wear others down by asking repeatedly. Learn that you can continue to interact comfortably with a person after they say no. By the end of the week, ask for something that has higher stakes – something you really want.

In a retail store, stop by and ask for a discount each day without buying and on the third day ask the salesperson to contact you when it goes on sale.

On phone orders negotiate additional fees - *“I’d prefer to not pay shipping / processing fees...”*

At home, ask for something that you’ve been turned down on before. Negotiate a compromise.

At work, look for low risk opportunities that you believe would typically be a “no”.

## Negotiation Gym (cont'd)

### **Week 4 – Step It Up**

Time to flex your muscles a bit. Be more strategic. Look forward and negotiate all throughout your day. Reflect on opportunities to ask for what you passed up in the first three weeks. Continue to ask for something each day this week and choose two items to negotiate. 1 bigger and 1 no-brainer. On Day 1 of this week, create a list of 4-5 things to ask for and choose two of them to negotiate. Save the biggest for the end of the week (a multi-issue item). Ask and then be prepared to negotiate. Choose something that isn't a slam dunk. Review your influence worksheet in your preparation for strategies. Make notes - what went well & what you need to practice. What emotions were you feeling?

### **Week 5 – Go Long**

Let's get personal. Have you been saying (or thinking) "sorry to bother you" or "sorry I asked?" Practice not apologizing this week. Ask people you know for something that you wouldn't normally ask for. Ask for 3 things you're pretty sure you can't get. Don't signal that you think you aren't going to get it. Ideally, ask people you care about, people with whom you have an ongoing relationship. Include at least one long shot you'd love to get. Don't apologize if you get turned down...smile and say "It was worth a shot."

### **Week 6 – Pile It On**

It's the home stretch. Tune in to your feelings about negotiating. Manage the voice in your head. Practice with bold moves. Focus on noticing other people's response.

Once each day, engage others in a "big ask" negotiation by telling them you are practicing your negotiation skills. Notice their reaction. You'll be surprised by their willingness to help you in full disclosure. How does this change the dynamic?

Ask for something big that you really think it's not okay to want, that would make you seem greedy or selfish to ask for, but something you really do want. Notice the negotiation style you revert to.

Don't scale back out of fear that you are overreaching.  
Fight the impulse to apologize or feel bad.  
It's okay to want what you want.

