

STARTUP LIFE

If You Don't Ask for Help, You'll Never Succeed. Here Are 6 Ways to Make It Easier

Successful people know how to ask for help, others hold back out of fear, pride, and discomfort. Here's how to comfortably ask for help and get what you want. [🔗](#)

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When a colleague recently called to ask me for my help it became uncomfortable for both of us. She was rambling and not getting to

the point, so I could tell she felt awkward about it—even nervous, and perhaps a touch embarrassed. I understood, but honestly, there was a part of me that felt a little perturbed. I wanted her to get to the point instead of hinting around. I was the one who finally had to ask the question, "Sally, do you need my help?" It took us less than 30-minutes to find several viable solutions to her problem and in the end, we were both happy. I felt great because I got to help someone I like and respect; Sally felt relieved that her problem was as good as solved.

Everyone needs help, especially entrepreneurs. Building a successful business alone simply is not possible, yet too many entrepreneurs avoid asking for help. The main reason is fear of rejection, but other things get in the way as well. Consider the following points to diminish your fear of rejection and increase the odds of getting what you need.

1. People want to help.

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Researchers, theologians, and leaders all agree that helping others gives us a greater purpose and makes us feel good about ourselves. People want to help, it's a natural instinct that some studies show is present at birth.

Give others an opportunity to help you, because when approached correctly, it makes everyone feel fulfilled and happy.

2. Allusion of transparency.

You may believe that it's obvious that you need help. No, it's not, because others are caught up in their own needs. It's not that we're selfish by nature, it's that most people don't go through their day thinking, "How can I stop what I'm doing and help so-and-so?"

Thinking that others should see what you're struggling with and automatically step in to help is referred to by psychologists as illusion of transparency. I hear comments from clients about their belief that someone in their life should know what they need and that he/she shouldn't even have to ask. Just ask, it makes life much simpler because no one is a mind reader.

3. No one will stop liking or respecting you.

When my colleague needed my help I certainly did not think less of her because we all get stuck from time-to-time. I only wished she'd be more direct and less uncomfortable. Her discomfort made the situation feel awkward for both of us. I wanted her to be more trustful of me, rather than doubting that I would help her. Her discomfort made a simple ask emotionally complicated for both of us.

Don't beat around the bush or become overly apologetic. Avoid repeatedly offering them a way out by saying things like, "If it's too inconvenient I totally understand." Do be kind and respectful, let them know (once) that you will understand if they are unable to help, and ask your question outright.

4. Give them details.

Rather than going on and on about the problem and waiting for the other party to jump in to save you, tell them exactly what you need. Sure, it feels better if they step up and offer help, but it's not fair to place that responsibility upon them.

Take the guesswork out of it for the other person; when you lay it all out you set them up for success and you'll get what you need from them.

5. Tell them why you chose them specifically.

In some instances, it's a good idea to let the other party know why you chose them for the job. I called a peer last week to request his help in better structuring my online course. I cited his incredible ability to simplify things that are overly-complicated. I knew he'd push back and remind me that, I too am good at these things, so I preempted him by saying that it's sometimes difficult to do for myself. By stating these facts up front I averted any attempt on his part to dismiss my needs. He also knew exactly which of his many skills I was depending on to help me out.

When a specific someone comes to mind, be forthright about it. They will feel good about your observations and it helps to move the conversation right to the point.

6. Don't make it transactional.

Offering a favor in return for a favor can backfire on you. First, it can seem manipulative because we all know that offering a return favor makes it harder to say no. Don't take that option away from the other person. You're offering a return favor just to make yourself feel better, but putting a bribe on the table just feels icky for everyone.

If you'd like to do something to thank them, do it tactfully. A small gift card in the mail, flowers, or an otherwise meaningful token of your appreciation are all appropriate gestures. Wait until after they deliver before offering something in return. After I helped a friend with a project, he told me that he's aware that sometimes I need someone to walk my dog when I'm away for the day. "The next time you need help with that please give me a call," he said. I was both moved, and relieved to find another helper.

Your friends, colleagues, and family all have good reason to help you since they respect and care for you. Give others an opportunity to lend a hand, because it can make everyone happy.