

Ask Once for What You Want And You Will Get It 50% of the Time

BY NABIL FANOUS

© MCE. This article was adapted from materials
from AMA & MCE's Open Programmes.





If you do not assert yourself when opportunities arise, you won't have your needs met. Just ask.

You go out with your spouse for dinner. As you follow the restaurant hostess, you notice two nice empty tables. But the hostess leads you to the absolute worst table possible—sandwiched between the kitchen doors and the entrance to the restrooms.

Yet, not only do you accept her choice, but you even thank her for it. And for the next two hours, you endure a thoroughly disagreeable atmosphere—the revolving kitchen doors on your left and the restroom traffic on your right.

But why did you accept that table? Why didn't you ask the hostess for one of the two better tables? And why did you even thank her?

Why didn't you assert yourself? Is it because you didn't want to cause a scene? Or you wanted to fit in and please people?

IF YOU DON'T ASK, YOU DON'T GET!

I understand that you may not want to act like those obnoxious, pushy, loud restaurant patrons. However, you don't have to be the person who is too resigned to argue or too polite to ask—the doormat.

I suggest a simple compromise: Ask—just once—for what you want.

By asking once, you're not begging, and neither are you being aggressive. You won't be stressed about being perceived as too demanding, nor will you chastise yourself later for being too polite.

You're simply asking a question, and you're only asking once. Whether it's a discount, a favor, a nicer hotel room, a better deal, a more convenient flight, or a date, start by asking for what you want—once—even if you think your chances of getting it are slim.

So even if you're shy or tend to be a people pleaser, ask once for what you want in life, and there is a good chance that you may get it or some version of it.

Stevie Wonder didn't wonder when he said, "If you don't ask, you don't get." And as self-help author Peter McWilliams reasoned, "Learn to ask for what you want. The worst people can do is not give you what you ask for, which is precisely where you were before you asked!"

YOU REALLY HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE

You may not get all of what you want, but occasionally, you may get some of it. That's still a plus.

Finally, if you have a little extra courage, you may even go ahead and ask—twice!

However, when you do so, your odds of getting what you want will only go up a little. There are five smart ways of asking for what you want:

Keep it short. The longer your sentence, the less persuasive it is, because it may give the impression that you're hesitating.

Keep it realistic. Getting what you're asking for will only be possible if your requests are achievable. As Goethe suggested, "If you want a wise answer, ask a reasonable question."

Open with effective words, such as "I would like" or "Can I" Starting with an "I" establishes your assertiveness.

Keep your demeanor friendly. If you're politely self-assured, it's more likely that the world will give you what you ask for.

And keep quiet once you have asked for what you want. If you keep talking, you will give the other person enough time to formulate an excuse for not complying with your wishes.

GUIDELINES FOR ASKING

Here are some suggestions for openers in various situations:

If you want a discount, ask, "Could I have a better price?"

If you want a service, you could ask, "Can I check out at 4 p.m. instead of 11 a.m.?" (Even if the hotel lets you stay only until noon, you're still better off.)

If you want to socialize, "hi" is still the best, easiest, simplest, shortest, and smartest opener ever—whether at a cocktail party, a professional gathering, or an encounter in an elevator. "How are you?" is second best.

WHEN ASKING ONCE ISN'T ENOUGH

Asking once will get you what you want around 50% of the time. That's good enough for your everyday needs.

But if what you want is of great importance to you, then asking once won't cut it. For example:

- If you want to place an offer on a home you really adore
- If you need a loan to save your company from bankruptcy
- If you want to pursue an intimate relationship with someone who you believe could be the love of your life



"When not getting it would be an unbearable blow to you, then selling for just a 50% chance of success is out of the question. But what do you think would be the maximum number of times you could ask?"



- If you want your siblings to help you look after a sick parent

In all such cases, when you're desperate for what you want, and when not getting it would be an unbearable blow to you, then settling for just a 50% chance of success is out of the question.

Under such circumstances, you don't have a choice but to keep asking. But what do you think would be the maximum number of times you could ask?

A "COLONEL" STORY

In the 1930s, Harland Sanders, owner of a service station, discovered a recipe for fried chicken and started serving some to his customers. His reputation and his clientele grew until a highway was built through his Kentucky town and traffic on his road dwindled.

The poor Colonel, as he was called, went broke. He was desperate and needed a partner. So he drove his car around for weeks, stopping at various restaurants to look for the right business partner.

He was rejected repeatedly, but he kept asking because he couldn't afford not to get what he wanted. Finally, he succeeded in finding a partner who accepted his proposal.

But how many times do you think Colonel Sanders had to ask for what he wanted? Ten times? Twenty? One hundred?

No—a thousand times!

Because for Sanders, it was a matter of life and death. He couldn't take no for an answer. And from then on, the Colonel's Kentucky Fried Chicken chain became an international enterprise grossing billions of dollars.

What about you? When desperate, how many times could you ask for what you want?

It's simple. The more desperate you are, the more times you will end up asking!

*Nabil Fanous, MD, is a surgeon, a university teacher, and a speaker at major international medical conferences. He is presently chief of the Division of Facial and Reconstructive Surgery and associate professor at the Department of Head and Neck Surgery for McGill University in Montreal. Dr. Fanous is the author of *The Universal Rules of Life: 27 Secrets for Managing Time, Stress, and People* (Forefront Books, 2022).*

MCE / KEY FACTS

MCE is your reliable partner for continuous success with agile people development solutions.



10,000,000

participants on AMA & MCE programmes in the last 10 years



92%

of Fortune 1,000 companies are our business partners



96%

of participants report they are using what they have learnt at AMA & MCE



1,000+

expert facilitators globally



100+

Open Training Programmes running throughout EMEA



98

year's experience working with our clients around the globe

For more information please contact:



+32 2 543 21 20

@ info@mce.eu

Visit mce.eu

