Making Effective Requests

Making effective requests of others is the key to getting what we need.

Unfortunately, many people hold back from making requests, especially huge requests, because it feels awkward to them. They worry that they may be imposing on other people. Others fear that people will reject their requests. Whatever the cause, we miss key opportunities to make things better.

Here are some key steps to make effective requests.

1. **Intention**—Before making your request, state clearly what you hope to accomplish and why it is of value. Create a bridge between what you want and something of interest to the other person. This lets people know what you seek to accomplish.

2. **Observation**—Be matter of fact and nonjudgmental. Most requests face rejection because we get into an ego clash—who's right and who's wrong. Make the observation your own with "I" statements. For example, "I notice . . . ." Include just the facts, no editorial comments or judgments.

3. **Request**—Make a simple, direct statement of what you really want and ask if the person is willing to provide it. The key is brevity and directness. Otherwise, people feel crowded, pressured, or confused. Deliver the request and wait for the other person to respond. Give them permission to accept, reject, or modify the request to work for both of you.

4. **Confirmation**—Restate and confirm what you have agreed upon. Don't let differing understandings undermine positive relationships and results.

This process works because it is very personal and direct. People clearly know our intent, know what we've observed, and know exactly what we are requesting.

You'll enjoy success if you have no expectations about specific outcomes, or even if someone accepts a particular request. That's their choice. This perspective will free you to request what you really want.

Making Effective Requests – Worksheet

My request: _____

Person(s): _____

1. **Intention:**

2. **Observation:**

3. **Request:**

4. **Confirmation:**