



I worked for this organization once that had this really wonderful professional development system. Every year we would receive \$600 to use as we saw fit toward our own professional development.

I loved this system. It gave me so much freedom to explore opportunities that I was really interested in. If you have any capability to do this at your own job, I highly recommend it.

One year, I got an email sort of out of the blue about this opportunity for social workers to do this professional exchange down in Cuba. I was really excited about the opportunity, but the deadline was tight and money was tight. I thought long and hard about it and then I realized I had this \$600.

I knew it was a stretch and I knew that it was a long shot, but I figured I might as well ask my organization if this would qualify for that \$600. The worst they could say was no. But they said yes and it tipped the scales for me. I went on the trip and it was such a huge opportunity. I'm so grateful and it wouldn't have happened if I didn't ask.

The reason you may have figured out that I have this visual on here is that we navigate our lives sometimes pretending, wishing, hoping, acting as if people are mind readers and of course, they're not but we hold ourselves back personally and professionally just expecting people to know what it is we're thinking and what we're feeling without articulating it to them.

The other piece of this is that people are so overwhelmed and busy and stretched thin that it's hard for them to keep everything at the top of their mind. It's hard for me and I'm sure it's hard for you too.

Because people don't offer you things that you think they should be offering you, it doesn't mean that they're mad at you or they don't like you or they're not good people. It means their minds are really preoccupied with other things.

Learn to ask instead of expecting other people to offer.

You're not going to get everything you ask for but you're not going to get most things without asking for them.

At one of my jobs, I was really interested in improving my Spanish. In my interview, they asked me where I was trying to grow and when they hired me they asked me again and I kept giving the same answer- I wanted to improve my Spanish.

Once I started working, I was sitting there twiddling my thumbs like, 'why aren't they offering me Spanish support? Where's my Spanish class? Why aren't they giving me Spanish PD?'

I was just sitting back so passive because I told them and they should know that this is something I was trying to work on.



Well, it wasn't being offered.

So finally I gathered up my courage. I jumped online. I looked for Spanish classes. I got all the details. I submitted it. I asked if they would pay for it and they did. Now again, I'm sharing examples with you that were successful. Certainly I wasn't successful every time I asked for something, but I'm using them as positive examples. If I just sat back and waited for them to find a Spanish class for me, I would have never gotten one. But I did and I took the class- que bueno!- and it was all from asking for it.

Now a little disclaimer I want to throw in here. I was back and forth about including this because it's vague. Most of the other videos are about really particular situations, so I didn't know if this would be valuable. But I thought it through and realized that in almost every situation we're going to be discussing there's a level of asking and learning how to ask for what you need.

That's why I decided to include it.

Let's just go through it knowing that it is going to be more general and not about one specific situation.

When it comes to asking for what you want, what about that is challenging for you? And how can you shift your mindset to better serve you?

A lot of times people think things like 'well, I don't want to be a bother' or 'they're too busy' or 'I don't want to put them out.'

I always try to remember when people I care about ask me for help, I'm so happy to help them in any way I can. So if you're asking people who you know, friends and family if this is a personal thing for you, of course, they are happy to help you out. When it comes to work, when my staff asks me for things, that's my job and I want to help them and support them and that should be the case for you as a supervisor and for your supervisor as well.

When you are asking for things, some important things to keep in mind- don't make assumptions about anything. Ever. Assumptions get us in so much trouble. A lot of times, we don't ask because we assume we know the answer.

'They'll never give me this money to go to Cuba' or 'they're never going to give me that promotion because the other person's more qualified' or 'they're never going to give me a raise because money is tight again.'

Sometimes the answer will be no but a lot of times it will be yes, and if you don't even ask based on your assumptions, then you're not setting yourself up for success.

When you're deciding whether or not to ask somebody something, make sure the reason you end up not doing it is not because you're making an assumption. Base it on facts and



then you can decide 'well, you know, this isn't going to work for this reason', but don't base it on assumptions.

Start with your why. Don't ever ask for something by saying, 'can I have a raise?'

The worst negotiation tactic ever.

Be clear about your why and be clear about what you're asking for.

Even if you're asking for a raise it might benefit you to be specific about what kind of raise you're looking for. Or if you say you want more professional development, that's really broad. It's hard for people to respond to things like that.

Learn to ask specifically for what you want and articulate why you should have it.

It's also really helpful to frame the conversation in a way that the other person is benefiting too. Once it feels more mutual, they'll be more likely to say yes.

When I made my case to go to Cuba, I didn't just say 'I love to travel and I want to see the old cars and eat some good food'.

I said, 'you know, it was an opportunity to connect with social workers around the country' which was true. It was an opportunity for me to practice my Spanish which was true. It was an opportunity for me to broaden my cultural competency because we worked with an international population.

I made my case for what was in it for the organization and why it was good for my work. I came back and did a presentation and shared best practices and all that good stuff.

Make sure you're framing it in a way that you're articulating the benefits for the other person as well.

You might have to follow up once, twice, ten times depending on the person and the situation and you'll need to decide for yourself when you've had it.

Is it worth it to keep following up or do you just need to figure it out for yourself or ask somebody else or put it on pause for the moment?

That's a decision for you to make.

I worked once for an executive director who was really driven by mission and was beyond overworked and overwhelmed. When you asked for something the first time- I can't even think of one time when I got it the first time- you always knew you had to follow up and maybe follow up again and sometimes multiple times. At one point my boss articulated to me that the squeaky wheel gets the grease.

They just had so much going on. They had to respond to the most urgent things that



were popping up for them.

Now I don't love that expression. I don't love the principle behind it.

But if I wanted to get what I needed then I had to abide by it and I had to keep following up until I got what I needed.

So the most important question for you is what do you need to ask for to be successful?