

Forming or Re-Forming Requests

Decide who will be the first “requester” and who is the first “receiver of the request.”

Step 1: Choose one of the example lines to say to someone, or use a line from your own life. Be clear on your relationship with the person you’re saying it to: colleague, employee, boss, romantic partner, sibling etc.

Step 2: Your exercise partner will play the role of the person you’re saying the line to. Go ahead and say the line to them. Your partner will then tell you how they feel hearing these words, and what unmet need is connected with each feeling.

In the following steps, the requester will work with their partner to try out different ways of asking for what they want.

Step 3: Formulate a request that is:

“**Clear & Do-able**” – it’s clear what you’re asking them to do, use “action language”
Deliver this version and get your partner’s reaction.

Step 4: Now add on:

“**Positively framing**” – in other words, ask for what you want, rather than asking for what you *don’t* want, or for what you want *to stop*
Deliver this version and get your partner’s reaction.

Step 5: Now add on:

“**Connection to your needs**” – make it clear what need(s) you’re trying to meet by making this request
Deliver this version and get your partner’s reaction.

Step 6: Now add on:

“**Connection to your feelings and/or observations**”
Deliver this version and get your partner’s reaction.

Step 7: Now add on a:

Present moment question – ask a question to hear back from them right now, in the present moment (apart from simply wanting them to say “yes”). For example:

- “Do you think that will work for you?”
- “What comes up for you hearing me ask for this?”
- “Do you foresee any obstacles to doing that?”
- “Can I check what you’re understanding about my request?”

Deliver this version and get your partner’s reaction.

Step 8: Your partner can suggest further tweaks to the request that would work better for them.

Example:

(You've seen your roommate putting a book that you believe is yours into their backpack)

Step 1 & 2: *"Can you please stop stealing!?"*

Now let's work on this using the guidelines:

Step 3: Clear & Doable: The above request is not as clear as it could be. More specificity would give more clarity. This might sound like:

"Can you please stop taking my books!?"

Step 4: Positive framing: In the above request you're asking the roommate to **stop** doing something i.e. asking for what you **don't want**. Positive framing could sound like:

"Could you please ask me first before using any of my books?"

Step 5: Connected to your needs: There was no mention of underlying needs in the above request. The "Ladder Questions" can help you get clear on your needs. Example:

"I want to have a choice about what I do with my stuff, and I like to know where my things are – and I also want us to respect each others property...so could you ask me first before using any of my books?"

Step 6: Adding in connection to feelings and observations:

"I think I saw you putting a book of mine in your backpack this morning, and I felt uncomfortable with that because I want to have a choice about what I do with my stuff, and I like to know where my things are – and I also want us to respect each others property...so could you ask me first before using any of my books?"

Step 7: Present request: In the present moment you might want to hear how this is all landing with the other person. If we add this in it might sound like:

"I want to have a choice about what I do with my stuff, and I like to know where my things are – and I also want us to respect each others property...so I'd like you to ask me first before using any of my books. How're you doing hearing this?"

Step 8: How would you change the wording of this request to a version that would be easier for you to hear?

Example “lines”:

1. “Could you stop smoking in my car when you borrow it?”
2. “I can’t talk right now, I’m too busy.”
3. “I need you to show me more love.”
4. “Stop being such a jerk!”
5. “We need that website update done by tomorrow morning first thing, OK?”
6. “Don’t buy such expensive things with our joint account!”
7. “Can you please stop leaving all the cleaning up in the kitchen for me – including your dirty dishes?”
8. “We’ll be having a party this Saturday night – you’re welcome to come, but please let us know if we’re too loud if you don’t come. Thanks.”
9. “Can you not mess up the shared living spaces with your stuff?”
10. “I’m ready to make this relationship more serious, are you?”
11. “Will you please stop singing that – it’s annoying?”
12. “You need to reply to me more quickly when I text or email.”
13. “I wish you’d bring some romance back into this relationship – don’t you even want to try to do that?”
14. “Will you start to call me more often? I’ve got no one to talk to and I get lonely.”
15. “Stop repeating yourself! I heard you!”
16. “Don’t wear that with that....it looks weird.”
17. “What are you making for dinner?”
18. “Can you not use insulting words in my presence?”
19. “Please don’t call me around meal times.”
20. “Make yourself at home.”
21. “Please try to be respectful!”
22. “Just answer my question!”
23. “Why do you have to be so mean?”
24. “Don’t talk about politics when you’re around me. I don’t want to hear your views!”
25. “In your next client presentation just focus more on your professionalism and enthusiasm.”