

Simple Request

Asking for something from someone else can be hard, especially if you fear rejection or anger in response. Or if you feel unworthy of attention or assistance. Part of DBT therapy is learning self-respect; and part of self-respect is knowing you have the right to make requests of others. Simple requests are just that: asking someone else to do something or provide you with something simple in response to a problem you might be having, or to fulfill something you need.

Do you have difficulty asking for directions if you are lost? Do you have trouble requesting an appointment change at work? Do you struggle to ask for a favor, a ride, or assistance with a task? You can learn to make simple requests using a few steps, which give you the best chance of having a positive outcome.

For example, imagine that your neighbors play loud music at night when you are trying to sleep. You are tired of it but don't know how to ask them to stop. Here is a three-step approach to solving the problem:

1. Identify the problem: "I can hear your music and it is keeping me up at night."

2. Use a kind statement: "Would you mind lowering the volume after 11 pm, please?" (Other options: "I would appreciate it if you would..." or "It would be helpful if you could..." or "I was wondering if you would...")

3. Use a grateful statement: "I would be so grateful," "It would really mean a lot to me," "Thank you for listening to me," "I really appreciate your help," and so on.

Now, list interpersonal problems you are having and write down how you would like to make simple requests in the coming week or so to resolve or minimize the problem. Be specific about what you would say, using the three-step model above.

1. Problem statement: _____

Kind statement: _____

Grateful statement: _____

2. Problem statement: _____

Kind statement: _____

Grateful statement: _____

3. Problem statement: _____

Kind statement: _____

Grateful statement: _____

In the next week or so, keep track of any situations when you used the Simple Request skill to help you improve your interpersonal effectiveness.

Situation/ With whom?	What was the conflict about?	What was your simple request?	What was the outcome?

Reflections on This Exercise

1. What parts of using the Simple Request skill worked well for you?

2. How did it feel when you used this skill?

3. If you struggled with a certain aspect of making a Simple Request, whom can you talk with to review what went well and what didn't go well? How would you like to go about asking them for help?

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What could you do differently to make progress in this area?
