Chapter One – Section 1

Foreword/Introduction

There are many universal truths in life.

The sun rises in the East, the postman always rings twice, the toilet paper roll goes over not under, and if you want something, you have to ask for it. It seems so simple, but while the concept itself may be uncomplicated, human beings are not. There are so many factors that go into the act of asking, and so many psychological quirks, hangups, and reluctances that prevent it. We may even go to great lengths to convince ourselves we don't have to ask. But, in the spirit of not reinventing the wheel, the ways we ask may vary, but the need to ask does not. Some things never change, as the saying goes. If you want something, you have to ask for it.

Assuming we know what we want, how do we get out of our own way and ask for it? This book will look at the art of the ask, break down and dismantle all the excuses we come up with to avoid doing so (and eradicate them), and clear the debris separating you and the success of your business. As the third generation owner of a successful marketing company (we started way back in 1903) the study and knowledge of asking for what you want is practically in my DNA. It is my pleasure, and frankly in my best interest to share it with you. I ask you now, to read on. Let's get you what you want.

The History of Knowing (and Getting) What You Want: The Early Years

There's an old adage with which we're all familiar. Ask, and you shall receive. It is in fact, literally, "the Gospel truth". Whether by prayer, a phone call, or a pointed look, if there's something in life that you want, you need to ask for it. But, even before we learn to read, or become indoctrinated into any particular way of thought or behavior, as human beings we enter the world equipped with

this innate knowledge. Who we ask, or how we ask may vary. But the fact that we do ask is consistent. To get what we want, we must ask for what we want. One might assert that even in our infancy we begin to communicate our needs by screaming, blowing out the eardrums of whomever is close enough to help (and often eliciting glares of unsympathetic restaurant patrons). If infants are uncomfortable in any way, other people hear about it. You might even say that it's less "asking" than it is "insisting"! At first this may be unconscious; we communicate our discomfort by expressing the truth of our discomfort. Soon enough however, we begin to make the connection; "When I cry, I get what I need." And soon, babies use this knowledge, as they absolutely should, to get their needs met. And since they are at the complete mercy of others, they'd better.

As our limbs gain greater agency, and we learn to crawl, walk, and begin to incorporate some bit of language, we also likely become aware of "stuff", as in toys, and/or the lack thereof. We become aware that there are things in life that we want and don't have. This extends beyond toys and stuff, most certainly, to include the need for love, to be heard, or simply to be held by someone. In fact, the need for love and acceptance precedes the need for toys, and some might say that toys (and the accumulation of "stuff") are in some cases a substitution for love and affection, but we digress. Often times the tantrums of toddlers stem from the frustration of being on the cusp of being able to communicate their needs, but not quite possessing the verbal skills to succeed. I'm sure we all have a story like the one an employee told me about her 2-year old niece. The family was at a popular breakfast spot, when her niece, already restless and squirming in her highchair, was trying to communicate wanting to watch "Bah Bah Black Sheep" on her mommy's phone, but could only say something which sounded to every adult like "Baba Geet". Again and again she reiterated "Baba" Geet! Baba Geet! Baba Geeeeeeet!!" Not understanding why no one was

honoring her request, or perhaps suspecting she was simply not being understood, she launched into a full-grade high decibel protest, until her father had to take her outside to calm her down out of earshot of those glaring unsympathetic restaurant patrons we mentioned earlier (they're everywhere!) That story also illuminates the frustration of asking for what you want, and not getting it, but we'll address solutions for that later.

When at last we can "use our words", the principles of marketing begin to emerge in how we get what we want. Our tactics gain sophistication. It is in childhood that we try them all on for size, testing their efficacy. The ones that work, we keep. The ones that don't, we toss.

It's human nature to devise and adjust tactics for getting what we want, and (in most cases) it's healthy. As a side note, most adults can trace their style for getting what they want all the way back to childhood. Personality traits develop based on the tactics they needed to employ as kids in order to win. Many comedians "had to be funny" as kids, many gregarious folks "needed to be loud" in order to be heard in a large family, some people learned that whining got them what they wanted the fastest. All of these are tactical forms of asking. And sadly, there are some people who may have picked up the idea that they didn't deserve to have their needs met, and may have given up. Those people are often taken advantage of in their adult lives, until they learn to see and change these perceptions learned in their early years. Ponder your own story. Think about how your style may help or potentially hinder getting what you need, in your business, or interpersonally. These factors show up in our company culture, and in all of our relationships.