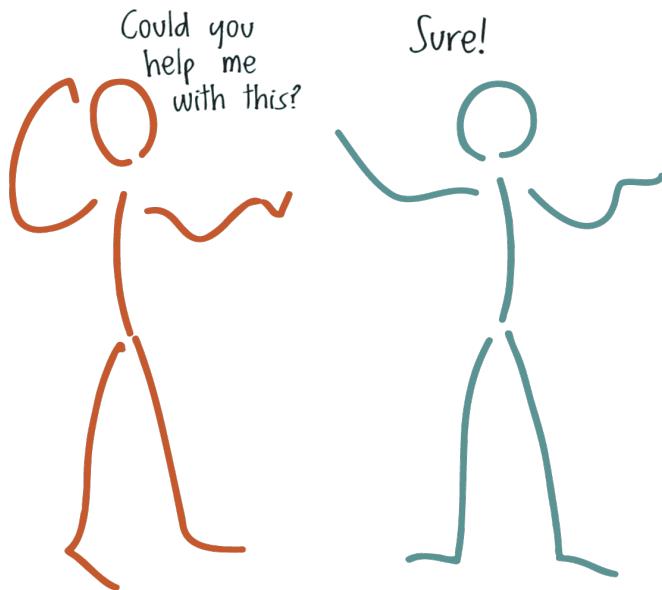


Asking for Help

+
participants




 **10+**
min



Purpose

Practice asking for help, regardless of what the response might be.

Muscles

-  Listening actively
-  Asking for help
-  Synthesizing / validating

1. **Make up something** you need help with. Ask your partner, “Could you help me _____?”
2. Your **partner should reflect back the request and respond**, “Yes, I could help you with that!”
3. **Switch, and repeat.** Move quickly. *Each* person should do this three times, coming up with a new request each time.
4. **Repeat the exercise**, except this time, the partner should reflect back the request and say, “No, I’m sorry, I can’t help you with that.” Do this three times *per person*, coming up with a new request each time. Remember, go fast!
5. Take a minute to **think about things you could actually use help with**. They could be small and trivial or large and weighty.
6. **Repeat the exercise with these real requests.** You partner should **reflect back the request and respond truthfully**.
7. Quickly **debrief with your partner**:
 - What did you notice?
 - How did it feel?
 - What did you learn?

For a variety of reasons, people sometimes find it challenging to ask for help, whether it's a fear of rejection or a desire not to be a burden.

However, the opposite is often true when it comes to giving help. People like to help others. It's a concrete way to make a contribution, and it feels good, and it happens to be an important attribute of high-performance groups.

Great groups support each other, but this isn't possible if people don't know what support is needed. Asking for help is so simple on the surface, it's easy to take for granted, but it's actually not easy to do, and it's important to be able to do it. Fortunately, anyone can get good at it with enough practice.

Variations

- ❑ To do this exercise with more than two people, basically go in a circle. In other words, if you had three people — Alice, Bob, and Carl — Alice would first make a request to Bob, Bob would then make a request to Carl, and Carl would then make a request to Alice.

Acknowledgements

The idea for this exercise came from a conversation with Curtis Ogden, who designed and facilitated a similar exercise with Carole Martin.