

# Learn This One Thing

+

## Learn to Ask!

Every time I moved to the next level in my business, It always involved asking. I will show you who why and how. Read on...



Some things to ask for:

### Partnership

Is there a local business you want to partner with for an event? Ask.

### Leverage

Is there someone reaching a large number of your potential customers. Ask.

### Publicity

Is there a blog, newspaper, or magazine you want to be featured in? Ask.

### Space

Do you want to have a pop-up store in your kids school or display your wedding cakes in a shop window? Ask.

### Taster

Think of three places or people you want to taste your cakes next week and call them today.

+

Can I tell you a secret?

By the time I ran my first international cake tutor class with Rick Reichart of [cakelava](#), I had asked four of my favourite cake decorating heroes to come to London to teach a class. They all responded but only one

worked out... at first.

## Learn to ask

***This is One Thing*** I want you to get down pat. I want you to master it as an art.

Conquer it as a territory and capture is like a... whatever... you get the picture?

Just picture me taking you by the lapels of your shirt and gently shaking you and saying to you "You. Must. Learn. To. Ask."

Let me tell you why and then I will show you how.



“Asking takes you out of your comfort zone: and trust me, that’s where the good stuff starts to happen”

That thing you want... Is someone going to come and gently place it in your lap? Not likely. You have to ask for it.

#### **Why do you need to ask?**

The short answer: Because you are in business and you want your business to grow.

There are many things about business that I am still sketchy about. Many that I consider myself still learning – twitter, photography, wordpress etc

But there is this ONE THING I know that works - regardless of your experience skills or connections. I know it works. Whenever I do it, things happen. Great things.

Growth. In my personal experience, I find that every time I experienced a game changer in my business, every time I did something extraordinary, every time I moved to the next level, every time I made a really valuable connection it was when I asked.



Sometimes the timing is not right. Ask anyway. Because when the time is right, you will be the first one they think of.

This is what happened to me when I asked Planet Cake to come to teach a class for us in London. They responded to my email several months later. That meant I got first refusal because they were now ready to run international classes. Sadly when they were ready I was not.

# You never know till you ask

Asking opens doors of opportunity for you. If you want to be seen in places where your customers go then you have to find the place and ask to be there – whether “there” is offline or online. You don’t ask everyday but once in a while, to get what you want or go where you want to go you need to ask.

And guess what? Asking costs little or nothing. Just your time and attention.

You just have to be willing to put yourself out there.

When I wanted to demonstrate at the Cake and Bake Show last year, I remember I sent off an email that said something like “I may not be a celebrity chef on TV but I can teach dammit!” I honestly wasn’t expecting a response but they got in touch and the rest is history. You just never know until you ask

Imagine this. You watch TV, see that everybody is talking about Red nose Day. You want to get involved. You have some ideas for a Red nose day cake or cupcake. Its time to ask! Call someone and present your idea. It may be your daughter’s school to get a pop-up cake stall, a newspaper to publish your red--nose cake story, a charity to donate a cake to raffle or even the TV station to make a cake for their Celebrity event. Or all the above? Why not? Just ask. You never know.

## Asking does not make you a bad person

I am not asking you to be a grabby person. Far from it. You are looking for situations that will be WIN--WIN. You want to make someone an offer they cannot refuse. Something that will benefit them and benefit you also. When I invited Rick to come and teach in London, he had never visited Europe and it was to be the same time as the 2012 Olympics. So I mentioned that in several of my emails. That was a great way to sweeten the deal. Ka--ching!

Your beautiful cake or cupcakes display will make that shop window unique and attractive. It

will make the florist or restaurant show that they care about their customers to provide these

extras. Win--Win. When I asked to demonstrate at the Cake and Bake Show, it was win--win. They filled up their

demonstration theatre. I got to get in front of my potential customers and also increase my credibility.

Win--win.

You never regret asking. It's like going to church or taking a shower. You may have to drag yourself there but you are always glad you did and you feel great afterwards.

# One thing leads to another

**You never regret asking.**

You may not get the answer you were looking for but you are always better for it. Always. You will learn something new. You may get a new contact, find out what your customer REALLY needs, figure out a better packaging method or simply learn what to do next time. More importantly, you will get more confident to ask the next person. One thing always leads to another.

I once gathered all my courage and approached a café to supply cupcakes. I set up the meeting and took in samples. Had my meeting with the owner. Lovely lady.

She said no.

We chatted some more and then she suggested I attend "Lunch!" -- a Trade show that I had never heard of before. I attended the event. There I met Jane Hatcher the owner of Prosperity Brownies. Stopped to chat at her stand. She told me her story. I was inspired (an understatement). We exchanged contacts. We emailed back and forth. She became like a mentor to me. She encouraged me to follow my dream at a time when I had nothing and was just starting out. Anyway, two years later I hosted my first cake business meeting and guess who the speaker was? Jane from [Prosperity Brownies](#). By the way, if you have not had a \_\_\_\_\_ prosperity brownie you have to try one. It will change your life.

The moral of the story? You never know where asking will take you.

When I asked Jonathan Oloyede to write a review for "[Talk to the Shoe](#)" my self--published book, I never knew he would become my pastor ~~three years down~~ the line -- the relationship had been formed when I asked. When I was looking to join a new church and heard he was starting a new church at the same time, things came together. It was at this church that I had my first cake customers. It was here that people tasted my cake and told me it was the best cake they ever tasted -- which grew my confidence as a cake decorator. In fact the birthday of the church is the same birthday of my first significant cake. That was 5 years ago.

You just never know.

You gotta learn to ask.

# I am not telling you what to do...

Instead I just want to show you a new way of thinking. I have mentioned examples of things to ask for but by the time you read this I am sure you will figure out other things you can ask for.

The good book says Ask and it will be given to you. And the bible also says “you don’t have because you don’t ask. D’oh! Common sense right?

In fact the book says if you ask your father for bread, would he give you a stone? It was a common sense question. That statement is saying what’s the worst that could happen if you ask? Would you be arrested and put on crime watch? People are generally nice and most are willing to help.

When I had my conversation with Sharon Wee, I asked her how she managed to get to run classes on the popular Craftsy website. Her answer? She asked.

Sometimes it is that simple.

Sometimes you are the person they have been waiting for.

It reminded that two years ago I had told a cake friend to “go ask Craftsy”. This lady makes AWESOME cakes that are loved by thousands of people all over the world. But perhaps she thought Craftsy was too big to go for, too far away, too way out there. Or maybe she just put it off for later. Whatever. The point is someone else asked and... well... no need to repeat myself.

**YOU DO NOT**

You need to understand something.

**HAVE TO BE**

Here it is: **THE BEST.**

*You do not have to be the best.*

But you have to be bold. Audacious. Confident. Focused. Tenacious. Persistent. Cheeky even.

There were many good cake teachers out there but I was the one who asked the Cake and Bake Show. Many talented popular cake artists but Sharon was the one who asked Craftsy.

**What do you have to lose? It costs nothing to ask.**

Learn to ask.

# What to ask for:

Here are some examples of things to ask for:

**Ask for the sale:** This is the obvious one. At some point in the relationship or interaction with your customer, you should ask for the sale. Flat out point blank ask. No more beating around the bush. Just ask. How many cakes do you want? What flavours do you want? When do you want the cake delivered? Ask a question that gets a commitment.

**Ask On facebook,** when you post a status or photo, ASK for a comment or ASK the recipient to share. Research shows you get over 50% more engagement when you ask.

**Ask for leverage.** This is my favourite. You are asking to work or partner with people and organisations that already serve your customers. It may be your local country club, a business on the high street or a popular hotel or restaurant. This is the leverage you need. You can also target schools and colleges. Or target mums clubs or the PTA of your children's school. Once you identify the one that will give you leverage, ask.

Ask to drop fliers at a shop or gym.

Ask to organise an event.

Ask to teach a class at your local community centre.

Ask to make a cake for the Christmas tree lighting ceremony.

Ask to make a cake for an X-Factor contestant – oh wait! Someone already did that! See you.

**Ask for help.** Hold on Ms Independent--superwoman--I--can--do--it--on--my--own cake person. There is nothing wrong with asking for help. If you need it, ask for it.

Be strategic. What is in it for them? What's in it for me? How can I get maximum traction and maximum exposure and get the most from the relationship.

It may take one phone call or several but stick with it and you will find a way.

**You gotta ask.**

Now I don't want to overflog the issue. After all I think after four pages you get the idea.

Yes Eme, I get it. I need to ask. But how do I do that? Glad you asked.

## How to Ask

When I am teaching, there are some cake tools that I show students and I say “the only instruction for how to use this tool is “Don’t be afraid”.

Your question: How do you ask?

My answer: Do not be afraid. This is the first step. Once you follow this instruction, you are halfway there.

Don’t be afraid. You are a cake person for goodness sake! Who doesn’t love cake?

Do not be afraid when you walk into that office and ask to supply cupcakes to their Monday meetings or their office parties or for colleague birthdays. If you don’t want to go in cold why don’t you first call and ask to bring them taster samples. Call six offices. At least two will say yes. More likely all six will say yes! Still afraid? Take a friend with you. Still afraid? Do it while shaking in your shoes. Remember that [X-factor](#) [guy](#) who sang beautifully while his knees were literally knocking? Keep that in your mind and just go do it. Especially when you really want it. You really feel it in your heart. Then go for it. They are probably already waiting for someone like you. Don’t let fear or nerves hold you back. Someone once said that 98% of success is simply showing up. Show up and ask.

Do not be  
afraid.



## 10 steps to asking

When you are asking for something what you are really asking for is a relationship.

Think about it. You approach this posh wedding venue to supply cakes to their brides or your local hairdressers to exchange money off vouchers for cakes and hairdos. It's a relationship you want. It could be a one-off fling, a seasonal thing or a long-term thing but you want a relationship. Just like relationships, obviously the long-term one is best because there is a real commitment but the short term ones may be what you need at the time to meet an immediate need or to get a specific job done.

When you google "How to ask... your autocorrect will bring up "how to ask a girl out". The reason a lot of people want to know is because there is a way to ask that gives you a better chance of a yes.

The steps to ask (a girl - or anyone else) go something like this.

1. **Find the right girl:** The one that fits you. The one you have something in common with. This is that person, business or organisation that has the same customers, goals or needs as yourself.
2. **Ask them on a date:** Ask to meet, send an email enquiry, make a phone call. You are exploring to find if they would be interested in hearing what you have to offer. Like in relationships, the words you use are important here. Don't beat about the bush. Don't be cheesy. Or arrogant.
3. **Prepare yourself (look and smell nice):** Print a brochure, make a cake, set up your website, write a price-list, make a portfolio.
4. **Set the scene:** Think of the packaging, the portfolio or photos you want to show them, the words you use to paint the picture in your email or letters.
5. **Look your best:** show your best side. Show them something you have done in the past that shows u can do what you propose. Even if you have never done this particular thing before. Take in tasters and samples. Create a display. A referral or a testimonial also helps.
6. **Pop the question:** Ask for the relationship. Make your offer. **Listen to their needs.** Let them know how you can meet that need.
7. **Sell the benefits:** Will you bring convenience? Are you saving them a trip to the supermarket? Will you add value to what they are selling ?- the hotel, the wedding planner, the cafe? Will you make the manager, the mum or the wedding planner become the hero? Tell them.
8. **Be persistent:** Sometimes asking involves more than one call, one visit or one email. It's a relationship remember? You are building trust. Listen and answer questions. You may need to clarify something or improve on something. Or it might just be a case of having to call 18 times before you get to talk to the right person. If you believe it will be worth it in the end then keep at it.



**9. Make the promises:** Whats in it for them? Be specific. Talk numbers if necessary.

**10. Keep your promises:** Self explanatory. In business and in real life relationships.

**11.** Rinse and repeat.

Make it a habit. Offer value. Be generous.

12. And finally, don't be afraid.

Thank you for reading this. If you have any questions or thoughts please leave a comment on the blog.

Is there something big and audacious you want to ask for but need some help to come up with a strategy? Drop me a line at [hello@emebassey.com](mailto:hello@emebassey.com)

---

### About me:

Eme Bassey (that's me) is a former cake decorating tutor turned digital marketing consultant and blogger.

I am passionate about bringing the best resources and education to creative entrepreneurs.

I blog at <http://storytellerchangemaker.com>

Find me on

facebook: [@thestoryadvantage](#)

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/eme-bassey-a193b9177/>

instagram: [@thestoryadvantage](#)

