KESTON SCHOOL



HUMAN BEHAVIOR · FREE SAMPLE

Ask for Help

Get the support you need at work and home, without the guilt

CHAPTER 1 + WORKBOOK SECTION

BEFORE YOU START

How to use this book

By the last page you will know why asking feels so hard, have a four-part way to make a clear request, a map of who to ask for what, and simple routines that make giving and getting help a normal part of your week.

1. Read one chapter at a time. Each one gives you a single idea and a single action.
2. Open the Ask for Help Workbook and complete the matching section while the chapter is fresh.
3. Do the “Try this” action within seven days. Reading changes what you know; the action changes what you do.
4. Finish with the checklist in chapter 12 and come back to it whenever you slip.

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CHAPTER 1

Why You Keep Going It Alone

Recognize your own pattern of not asking for help and see why trying harder, hinting and waiting for a crisis keep failing.

It is 11 p.m. and you are still at the kitchen table with your laptop. The report is due tomorrow, and one part of the spreadsheet refuses to work. You have watched three tutorials. You have tried the same fix four times. Two desks away from you at the office sits a colleague who could solve this in about five minutes. You thought about messaging her at four o'clock. You did not. She looked busy, you did not want to seem slow, and you were sure you would figure it out on your own.

Now it is late, you are tired, and the report is still broken.

The quiet signs you are not asking

Most people who struggle to ask for help do not think of themselves as people who struggle. They think of themselves as independent, reliable and capable. Those are good qualities. The trouble starts when they turn into a rule: I handle things myself, no matter what.

Here are some common signs that the rule is running your life:

- You say "I'm fine" or "I've got it" before you have even thought about the question.
- You stay stuck on a problem for hours rather than send a two-line message.
- You do most of the household planning, then feel quietly resentful that nobody else does.
- You help other people often, but you cannot remember the last time you asked for something.
- When someone offers help, you refuse out of reflex, then wish you had said yes.
- You wait until a situation is a real emergency before you tell anyone it is hard.

If three or more of these sound familiar, this book is for you. You are not lazy, needy or weak. You are carrying more than you need to, and you have a habit that keeps it that way.

Four fixes that do not work

When people notice they are overloaded, they usually reach for one of four fixes. Each one makes sense in the moment. None of them solves the problem.

Trying harder. You stay later, get up earlier and push through. This works for a week or two, and then the load is still there and you have less energy to carry it.

Hinting. You sigh loudly at the sink full of dishes. You mention in a meeting that you are "a bit swamped." You hope someone will notice and step in. Sometimes they do. Often they do not, because a hint is easy to miss and even easier to ignore. Then you feel unseen on top of overloaded.

Waiting for a crisis. You hold everything together until it falls apart, and then you finally ask. By that point the ask is big, urgent and stressful for everyone. The other person has no time to plan, and you feel even more like a burden.

Asking vaguely. You say, "Let me know if you can help with anything." The other person says, "Sure, just tell me." Nothing happens. A vague ask gives people nothing to say yes to.

> **Key idea:** The problem is rarely that nobody would help. The problem is that nobody was clearly asked.

What changes when you learn to ask

Asking for help well is not a talent some people are born with. It is a skill with a few clear parts: understanding what stops you, making a specific request, choosing the right person, receiving help gracefully and giving back. Each of these can be learned and practiced in small, low-risk steps.

When people start asking well, a few things tend to change. Problems that took an evening take ten minutes. Work gets better because someone else spotted the mistake. Home feels fairer because the load is shared out loud instead of silently. And relationships often get closer, because letting someone help you is a way of letting them in.

You also get something less obvious: a clearer picture of your own week. Once you start asking, you have to name what you need, which means you have to notice it first. Many people who work through this book find that the simple act of writing down their asks shows them where their time and energy really go.

What this book is and is not

This book is about everyday help: a colleague's know-how, a partner's share of the chores, a friend's hand on moving day, a neighbor watching your cat. It gives you practical tools, scripts and routines for those moments.

It is not a substitute for professional support. If you are dealing with a health problem, ongoing low mood, money trouble, a legal issue or any situation where you feel unsafe, the most important ask is to a qualified professional, such as a doctor, counselor, financial adviser or lawyer, or a local support service. If you are ever in crisis or thinking about harming yourself, contact your local emergency number or a crisis line right away. Asking for that kind of help is exactly the skill this book is about, used where it matters most.

Try this

Take ten minutes in the next three days and make a short list in your workbook. Write down three things you are carrying alone right now: one at work, one at home and one anywhere else. For each one, note who could help, even a little, and why you have not asked. Do not ask anyone yet. Just look at the list honestly.

Many people find that seeing the list on paper is enough to notice the pattern. The reasons start to repeat: they are busy, I should know this, I don't want to bother them. Those reasons are worth a closer look, because they are rarely as solid as they feel.

In the next chapter, we look at the stories that keep you from asking and why they are so convincing.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Not asking is a habit, not a personality trait you are stuck with.
- Trying harder, hinting and waiting for a crisis all keep you stuck.
- Asking well is a skill you can learn in small, safe steps.

→ Workbook, section 1

01 Why You Keep Going It Alone

See what you are carrying alone and how you usually avoid asking.

FILL IN

Three things I carry alone

Area	What it is	Who could help	Why I haven't asked
Work			
Home			
Anywhere else			

CHECKLIST

Signs that sound like me

- [ ] I say "I'm fine" by reflex
- [ ] I stay stuck for hours instead of asking
- [ ] I do the planning, then feel resentful
- [ ] I help often but rarely ask
- [ ] I refuse offers, then regret it
- [ ] I wait for a crisis before telling anyone

CHECKLIST

The fixes I usually try

- [ ] Trying harder
- [ ] Hinting
- [ ] Waiting for a crisis
- [ ] Asking vaguely

Which reason for not asking repeats most often on my list?

YOUR NEXT STEP

Want the whole book?

You just read chapter 1 of Ask for Help and tried the first workbook section. The full e-book has 12 chapters, a complete workbook and a final checklist. Here is everything inside:

01 Why You Keep Going It Alone

02 The Stories That Stop You

03 What Doing It All Costs

04 Help Runs Both Ways

05 Make a Clear Ask

06 Choose Who to Ask

07 Receive Help Well

08 Four Moments to Ask

09 When the Answer Is No

10 Make Asking a Habit

11 A Life With More Support

12 Mistakes & Checklist

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