

# How to Ask for What You Want

By  
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Have you ever been at a loss for words when someone asked you what you do?  
Stumbled through a response trying to describe the kind of job you are looking for?  
Questioned why you aren't connecting with the opportunities you seek? Maybe it's time  
to get clear about what you really want.

## **Clarity is Magnetic!**

I have a client who owns a graphic design business. When people asked him what he does, he used to tell them just that--graphic design. What he didn't tell them was that his business was focused on the entertainment industry, specifically film and television. His company was responsible for designing promotional material that supported major motion pictures like "Star Wars" and cable television affiliate sales programs for networks like Discovery, Animal Planet and A&E. When he incorporated these important elements into his pitch, people could instantly connect with what he did.

I spoke with a woman recently who was having difficulty attracting the kind of business she wanted. When I asked her what kind of business that was, her answer confused me. She finally admitted that she wasn't really sure what she wanted. She felt she lacked clarity.

The chances are she knows exactly what she wants but she doesn't realize it. That's because clarity can easily be confused with articulation. You may feel you lack clarity because you can't name what you want to do or can't clearly describe it. Perhaps you can't see how what you do is distinguished from what hundreds of others do.

Here's a stunning fact about clarity. Even if you cannot say with certainty what you want, you always know how you want to be! I discovered this for myself several years ago when I was struggling to find the work that would be right for me after leaving the corporate world. A friend asked me one day the question that stumps us all at one time or another, "So Marianne, what do you want to do?" I remember saying, "Don't ask me what I want to do. I can't tell you. But I do know exactly how I want to be." I went on to describe the kind of creative life I live today. My "perfect" work evolved from that.

## **Is it clarity or commitment?**

A reluctance to commit often disguises itself as a lack of clarity. Many people I speak with know exactly what they want but are unwilling to commit to it. A lack of commitment is really about fear. You may be afraid that committing to what you want will limit your opportunities. But just the opposite is true. If you will not commit to

asking for what you really want, if you are vague and equivocating, you will only confuse others about what kind of opportunity to bring you. Take Rachel for example.

Rachel left her six-figure job as a senior executive with a Fortune 100 company to take care of a pressing family matter. During the time she was away, Rachel decided she wanted to follow a different path when she returned to work. We spoke at length about her vision for her new career. She was very clear about what she wanted. With her education and connections, she had a good chance of getting it. But as far as I know she never did. Rachel knew what she wanted but she wouldn't ask for it. She waffled back and forth about her old career path and the new one. She was afraid to cut off her opportunities so she just confused herself and the people who were trying to help her.

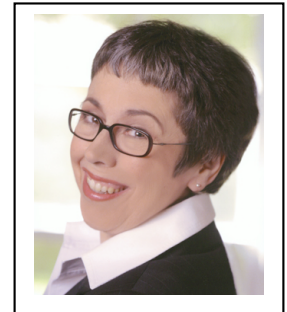
### **What do YOU really want?**

Putting fear aside, tell me what you want in one short, crisp, vivid sentence that will help me instantly connect with what you are looking for.

Knowledge is power! The clearer you are in communicating what you want, the faster it will come to you.

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