Goal: To help everyone feel comfortable about asking in their own style.

Rationale: We tend to act toward others as we want others to act toward us. If we understand how we like to be asked, we will better understand how we will feel comfortable asking others.

Specifics

Audience: Excellent for board members, fundraising committee members, development staff members, and other volunteer solicitors.

Estimated Time: 15 minutes (or longer, if you have the time).

Number of Participants: This exercise is effective with groups of any size. For five or fewer, do not break out into smaller groups.

Participant Preparation: Everyone should take the Asking Style Assessment and email their result to the facilitator. If this is part of a larger training, use nametags or name cards and have everyone write RM, GG, KS, or MC on them.

Room Set Up: A room with flexible seating so people can form groups of three or four.

Material: Copy of Asking Style grid, nametags

The Exercise

Facilitator: The facilitator is responsible for setting up the exercise, giving clear instructions, managing the debriefing, and providing a summary of key points at the end.

Introduction: “This exercise will help us develop a perspective on how we like to be asked and how that impacts us as askers.”
Instructions

1. If the group is larger than five, ask people to break into groups of three or four.
2. Have everyone take a nametag and put their Asking Style initials on it (RM, GG, KS, MC) and their name if helpful.
3. If someone hasn’t taken the Assessment, share the Asking Styles grid and have them choose the Style resonates most.
4. In each group, have each person answer three questions and discuss with each other:
   a. “How would I like to be asked for gifts?” (Note: This is purposely left open to interpretation.)
   b. “How does my Asking Style effect how I would like to be asked for gifts?”
   c. “How would I like to ask someone else for a gift and how is this similar or different from how I’d like to be asked?”

Debrief

After seven or eight minutes bring the group back together. Ask for volunteers to share what they learned:

- How do you like to be asked and how does that relate to your Asking Style?
- So what does that tell you about how you would behave as askers?
- What differences did you find between your approach and that of others in your group?

Conclusion: Everyone has their own style of asking, often based on their likes and dislikes. We tend to act toward others as we want to be treated. As askers we should do what’s natural and comfortable, so we will tend to ask others in a manner similar to how we like to be asked. This is perfectly fine. We should not try to be something we’re not. If we try to be something we think our donors want, we come off as inauthentic and this will be counterproductive in developing the relationship.