

Moving from COMPLAINT TO REQUEST



This exercise is designed to give you a different, more powerful way to work through the things you don't like and to influence the creation of what you would like better. In other words, you are learning how to activate your complaints. The first step is to recognize when you have a "complaint" and to use that as your signal that it's time to dig underneath the complaint to find the opportunity hidden inside of it.

Part I. To get started, collect a handful of complaint-like sentiments that occur to you over the course of the next day or two. Remember to consider "complaints" broadly to include things you might ruminate over but never give voice to, things you don't like, things that irritate you, and so on. Write these complaints in the left-most column of this worksheet.

Part II. After you have gathered at least 3 complaints, find a quiet time. For each complaint you collected, work left to right to fill out each column below for each complaint. (You will see an example below that guides you through this process.)

The Complaint	The Emotion	The Unmet Need(s)	The Opportunity – Find the Request(s)	Who Am I When I Meet This Need?
Bob frequently wastes my time. He comes to me and just starts speaking. I don't know what he wants or why he is telling me the things he tells me, and I don't know if he does this on purpose, but he always seems to come to me at the worst times, like when I am in the middle of working on an urgent matter.	I feel irritated, anxious, and guilty. When Bob comes to my office, I feel like the nice thing to do is to listen to him, be supportive, and hope that he will get to the point. I worry that if I don't do that, I will look like a jerk and then maybe Bob won't be there for me when I need him to be.	<p>I have a need to have more control over my time</p> <p>I have a need to know what Bob needs</p> <p>I have a need to get my work done on time</p> <p>I have a need to have Bob respect my other obligations</p> <p>I have a need to be a nice guy/gal</p>	<p>Bob, I am on deadline; can this wait until 3 PM today?</p> <p>Bob, I want to get you what you need but I'm in a crunch. If you let me know your question, I'll see if I can answer it quickly but if I can't we may need to set up time to sync tomorrow.</p> <p>Bob, I've learned I'm not great at paying attention until I know what is needed of me. Can you start by bottom-lining this for me and then give me the detail? That will help me listen better.</p>	<p>Someone who manages my time, has predictability</p> <p>Someone who is able to get my work done on time</p> <p>Someone who can exert control over my time through skilful, kind negotiating or social contracting</p> <p>A nice guy/gal?</p> <p>A better listener?</p>
The Complaint	The Emotion (Irritation, Fear, Anger, Anxiety About xyz)	The Unmet Need	The Opportunity – What Request(s) Could You Make?	Who I Can Be By Meeting This Need?



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