

# CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER

## How to make an effective ask

We need to mobilise others to make explicit commitments in order to achieve our strategic outcomes and goals. To build our movement, we have to have lots and lots of conversations. How do we make sure these conversations are effective in securing those specific commitments?

When we commit others to action, we are giving them an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to a cause they care about. So why don't we always just ask? Sometimes, we worry about burdening others, or we worry that they will say no and we'll feel rejected, or maybe they'll say yes and then we'll have to commit ourselves!

When we ask others to join us, it is critical that we use clear, concise language. Sometimes we may try to minimize the commitment, making it seem smaller or less important than it really is. But respecting others means being very transparent about the work ahead, about the support they'll receive, and giving them a choice of whether or not to commit.

## The 4 C's - a model for making an effective ask in your conversations

### Structure

#### Connect

- Smile, use open and welcoming body language and an appropriate amount of eye contact
- Introduce yourself, why you're doing what you're doing, and let them know why you're asking them to help
- Ask questions to allow the "ask" to be as specific as you can to the person you're talking to.

#### Context

- Explain what you and your team are planning. Provide details about who your group is, the exact challenges that move you to action right now, the real hope, and a strategic choice. Why is what you're asking useful, powerful, and important?
- Suggest why should this matter to the person you're speaking to (remember to use values as well as facts)

- Explain why the action you are asking them to take is urgent.

### **Commitment**

- Explicitly ask the other person if you can count on them to engage in action with you. Be very specific about the date, time, and place. When and where should they meet? What will they be doing? For how long? How many other people will be there? etc. The commitment you're seeking should flow directly on from the context and make sense in offering an empowering and effective part of the solution you laid out.
- PAUSE and listen carefully. Is the answer:
  - “Yes! Definitely!” (Great! Confirm the details)
  - “Maybe . . .” (Ask what questions they have and how you can follow up.)
  - “No, I’m sorry.” (Ask why? Give them your contact info in case they change their mind.)
- Handling Objections

You can use the *Feel, Felt, Found* method to empathise with the persons barriers to participation by referencing your own experience. For example: “I understand why you’d FEEL hesitant to get involved. When I first started volunteering I FELT really scared of putting myself out there. But when I started to come along to events I FOUND that everyone in the movement was very friendly and supportive, and now here I am trying to recruit others!”

### **Catapult**

- Make the commitment real: ask how the person is getting to the event, what they’re going to bring, if they can invite a friend. Describe what will happen and what it will look like. If the person has plans and can imagine themselves there they are much more likely to attend!

## Worksheet: Conversation script

Use the space below to plan out your practice conversation. Remember it doesn't have to be perfect or word-for-word what you want to say: dot points are fine. Some details have been provided which you can choose to use or not.

### Connect

Hi! This is (name) from the ACF community group in (location). \_\_\_\_\_

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### Context

I've just spent the weekend with dozens of other concerned community members, making plans to take effective action to move decision makers away from coal and toward clean energy. I've joined a local group and \_\_\_\_\_

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### Commitment

I'm calling to ask if you would join me \_\_\_\_\_

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WAIT for them to think and respond.

1. If yes: Confirm the DATE, TIME, LOCATION. "Can I count on you to be there?"
2. If no or maybe: discuss barriers

### Catapult

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