



Just Ask – Ask, Ask, Ask!!!

Early one recent Saturday morning I took a taxi to the airport and asked the taxi driver to stop at my bank so that I could make an important deposit into my checking account. I was leaving town for a week and really needed to get the money into my account to cover automatic withdrawals. The bank was closed so I had to do this transaction through the bank machine. As I reached for the deposit envelopes next to the machine, I found that there were none. I was momentarily panicked and wondered what I should do next. In mild desperation I walked out to the taxi and asked the driver if he happened to have an envelope. He reached down and handed me not just an envelope, but a bank deposit envelope! Needless to say, I was both quite surprised and extremely pleased. I ran back to the bank machine and made my deposit. When I returned to the taxi, I told the driver that I really didn't know why I even asked him if he had an envelope. It was such a long shot that he would have one – but I didn't know what else to do. This taxi driver was a very animated gentleman, and he said to me with great enthusiasm, "When you need something in life, you just have to ask for it – ask, ask, ask. Someone will always have what you need. But you have to ask!"

He repeated this to me several times, and I couldn't help but feel there was a bigger lesson in this than just about a deposit envelope. How many times had I not gotten help with something simply because I didn't ask? How many times was there someone nearby who could have made my life easier if I had only thought to ask them?

Burden is a common emotion experienced by caregivers. You may be able to relate to feeling like there is much more to do than you can possibly get done. If you are like most people, you probably don't ask enough for help from others. Or, if you do ask for help, it may always be from the "usual suspects", the same few people you always go to for help. What if, just for today, you asked more freely for help with things so that you were less burdened by caregiving, by life in general? You don't even have to ask for help with the caregiving tasks, you can ask for help with other things in your life that are adding to your burden – perhaps laundry, cleaning the house, tasks at work...anything that would lighten your load.

Since my taxi ride I've become more aware that "all I have to do is ask" and often I really will get what I need. People generally want to be helpful – we may just not be giving them enough of an opportunity. So today, remember the wisdom of my taxi driver: "When you need something in life, you just have to ask for it – ask, ask, ask. Someone will always have what you need. But you have to ask!"

Dr. Amy