The Edge: Asking for help can empower

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(Photo: For FLORIDA TODAY)

Asking for help may seem easy, but for many of us it is a very hard thing to do. Yet, learning to ask for help might be one of the most important things you ever do if you truly want to take your performance to the next level.

After all, modern life may have given rise to individualism in our culture, but nothing magnificent is ever created by just one individual.

So why do we think we need to carry so much of the load ourselves?

I’ve been thinking about some of the things that have gotten in the way of my willingness to ask for help. Here’s my top five:

• I can do it myself, so why ask someone else?

• It’s faster to just do it myself.

• I should know how to do it, so maybe I need to do it myself so I can learn.
• I don’t want to admit that I can’t do it all — to myself or anyone else.

• I can’t afford to get help.

Behind each one of these reasons to not ask for help is one fundamental fear: It is the fear that you are not enough.

You can feel intensely vulnerable when you ask for help or support in something that truly matters to you. What if they say no? What if they think less of you for asking?

Yet, what if asking freed you up to do what you do best? What if asking helped you connect the dots of understanding to make your next bold move? What if asking could give you the freedom to take a weekend off or take that vacation you have wanted and needed to take?

When you ask from your commitment instead of your fear, you will be surprised at how many people will say yes.

Amanda Palmer ran one of the most successful crowd-funding campaigns ever to raise money to support her music. The record company was not satisfied with her results of only 25,000 units sold, so to keep pursuing her art, she took matters into her own hands. She set out to raise $100,000. She raised $1.1 million.

When asked how she did it, she replied:

“I didn’t make them. I asked them. Through the very act of asking people, you connect with them. And when you connect with people, they want to help you.”

What could you ask for that has the potential to fuel your dreams or maybe even just make your life a little easier so you have the time and energy to do what you do best? Figure it out, and then go for it.

If you’d like to read more on this topic, check out Amanda Palmer’s TED Talk — “The Art of Asking.”

Susan Mazza is a business consultant, leadership coach and motivational speaker. She works with leaders and organizations to transform performance, is the CEO of Clarus-WORKS, founder/author of Random Acts of Leadership and an IGNITE Mentor at the Women’s Business Center. She was named one of the Top 100 Thought Leaders by Trust Across America in 2013.