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Tactic of the Week #61

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Tactic #61 - Appealing to Mother Teresa

Summary: Asking a counterpart for help.

Mother Teresa was world-renowned for recruiting the help of others to achieve her mission. People found it difficult to refuse Mother Teresa. Why? One reason was that she had an unwavering passion for the causes to which she devoted her time. A second reason was the way she set up a request. She would look a person in the eye with genuine sincerity and state, "I have a problem, and I need your help."

Looking your counterpart in the eye and saying, "I have a problem, and I need your help," can be very effective because this tactic touches the part of human nature that wants to be strong and help others. You are asking your counterpart to be as noble and giving as Mother Teresa. Only a very cold person finds it easy to respond, "I can't help you."

Example

An employee walks into his boss's office and admits, "I have some problems and I need your help. I have recently gone through a divorce, my rent has just increased, and my oldest child is now going to college. I really like working for you and this company. Is there anything you can do to help me earn a higher income here so I don't need to go looking for a higher-paying job?"

Counter

Of course, the manager could simply say "no." Another option would be to issue the tactic of the [Conditional No](#), stating, "I cannot give you a raise today, but I will consider it in three months when we start the next fiscal year." Third, utilizing the tactic of [There is More Than One Way to Skin a Cat](#), the manager might suggest, "Although I cannot give you a raise in your current position, we could talk about other positions in the company that pay more money." Fourth, the manager may want to employ the tactic of, [I'll Think About It and Get Back to You Later](#) to buy some time. No matter which counter the manager chooses, he should empathize with the employee, who is in a difficult situation.

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This tactic is one of 101 strategies and tactics featured in [The Only Negotiating Guide You'll Ever Need](#), by Peter Stark and Jane Flaherty.



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