



ASK CULTURE/GUESS CULTURE – Introduction

Is this subtle and little-known dynamic causing tension in your marriage? You and your spouse may have a vastly different relational lens when it comes to communicating wants and needs.

If you see relationships through the lens of "Ask Culture," you are more direct when expressing wants and needs to others. This can be an asset, but you may also miss nuances when others are less straight-forward.

If you see relationships through the lens of "Guess Culture," you're comfortable with nuanced communication. You may drop hints or look for clues as to how your subtle requests are being received. You are tuned in to others, carefully observing to discern what they need/want.

Reflection

1. You may be predominantly “asker” or “guesser” or, you may operate in one style in some relationships and the opposite style in others (e.g., Asker at work and Guesser at home). Write your initials where you see yourself on the following scale. Write your spouse’s initials where you see him/her. Are there circumstances or people where either of you go to the opposite style? If so, list a few.

Predominantly
Ask Culture

Evenly Split Between
Ask & Guess Culture

Predominantly
Guess Culture

2. In what ways has the “culture” you are most comfortable with served you well? In what ways has it caused relational problems for you?

Study pages 47 and 48 to learn more about Ask and Guess Cultures. Understanding your personal communication lens will increase your Emotional Intelligence (EQ). Whatever your style, becoming a healthier Asker or Guesser will expand your capacity for empathy, reduce misperceptions, and grow relational resilience. As you read, underline or highlight phrases that describe you in your healthy and unhealthy moments. Pray that God will guide your learning.

ASK CULTURE		
H E A L T H Y	WHEN ASKING:	<p>Askers, when healthy, are emotionally intelligent and assertive, able to express themselves clearly and honestly while at the same time, being sensitive and considerate of others. They're straightforward and clearly convey their wants/needs. They're good advocates for themselves and don't expect others to read their minds. They are able to graciously receive a "no" answer without pushing or feeling resentful. Askers at their best are skilled at finding win-win outcomes.</p>
	WHEN RECEIVING/ PERCEIVING ASKS:	<p>Askers feel empowered to say "no" when necessary—because they're realistic about what they can reasonably accomplish. This allows them to give cheerfully and willingly, even sacrificially (verses harboring resentment from saying "yes" to more than they can reasonably give). Healthy Askers aren't offended by others' requests. They're able to ask for their own needs and desires and bless others to do the same.</p>
U N H E A L T H Y	WHEN ASKING:	<p>Unhealthy Askers are not tuned in to other's so they may continue to push for what they want even if it's not being well-received. If they do get what they want, they see it as a "win" but fail to notice when the other person leaves feeling bullied, exhausted or resentful. They can be demanding and insensitive to boundary violations. Unhealthy Askers lack self-awareness so they can come across as presumptuous or oblivious at times.</p>
	WHEN RECEIVING/ PERCEIVING ASKS:	<p>Unhealthy Askers operate on a more selfish assumption—if an "ask" is inconvenient, they simply say "no". Communication with an unhealthy Asker must be bold and establish clear, measurable boundaries. Subtleties will be missed. Viewing relationships from a one-sided perspective and being oblivious to the needs of others negatively affects the relationships of unhealthy Askers.</p>

Matthew 5:37 "...let your 'yes' be 'yes' and your 'no' be 'no'...."

GUESS CULTURE		
H E A L T H Y	<p>WHEN ASKING:</p> <p>WHEN RECEIVING/ PERCEIVING ASKS:</p>	<p>Healthy Guessers are emotionally intelligent and compassionate. Instead of expecting others to read their mind, they are able to take ownership for clearly communicating their own needs and desires. They filter the decision of whether or not to ask for something through a lens of tuned-in consideration. They're highly perceptive and have keen intuition which, when paired with an altruistic desire for win-win outcomes, makes them great moderators, diplomats, and healers.</p> <p>Healthy Guessers watch carefully for clues so they can serve with a cheerful heart, free from resentment. They "guess" at other people's needs out of love and because they want to, not because they have to. "Yada," a Hebrew word translated "knowledge" in Proverbs 24:4 means to ascertain by observation, care, and recognition. This awareness is an attribute that Guessers at their best masterfully embody. To avoid burnout from over-giving, a healthy guesser has learned to have realistic expectations about what can be reasonably asked/expected of them.</p>
U N H E A L T H Y	<p>WHEN ASKING:</p> <p>WHEN RECEIVING/ PERCEIVING ASKS:</p>	<p>Instead of asking directly, unhealthy Guessers either become passive (not expressing their needs and wants at all) or, passive-aggressive (making covert attempts to get what they want without having to ask). They become frustrated with others' failure to live up to their unrealistic expectation of "mind reading". The farther away a Guesser moves from like-minded community, the more likely they are to experience this frustration.</p> <p>Unhealthy Guessers exhaust themselves trying to guess and respond to what they perceive others want. This leaves them bereft of energy and capacity to say "yes" when asked directly for what was wanted in the first place. Instead of appreciating the Guesser's original efforts, others may resent not being allowed to speak for themselves. Dependence on guessing leads to confusion, anxiety, and frustration for both parties. Unhealthy Guessers are easily offended when Askers make direct requests rather than dropping subtle hints.</p>

Philippians 2:4 "Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." NKJV

For a Biblical example of Guess Culture, see Genesis 23:1-16