

Conscious Communication



A **request** has three elements, and you're always asking someone else for some action:

Elements of a Request	Examples: Clear and Direct	Non-Examples: Vague
A committed speaker doing the requesting <i>directly</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Will you...” • “I request that you...” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I wish someone would...” • “You/they should...”
A specific action, by a specific person.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Will you meet with me to discuss...?” • “Will you own that next step?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Could you or someone on your team take care of that?” • “I think that’d be a great project for someone on the HR team”
A specific timeline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Will you send that email by Friday at 4pm?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making it vague: “Anytime this week” or “as soon as you can” • Avoiding time altogether and never agreeing to a deadline.

A **proposal** has the same three elements, but this time you're in on the action:

Elements of a Proposal	Examples: Clear and Direct	Non-Examples: Vague
A committed speaker doing the proposing <i>powerfully</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I propose we meet for 1 hour to work on that report together” • “I’m going to this conference, and I would like you to join me” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Maybe we should...” • “I might [do xyz...]” • “Do you think we ought to...”
A specific action, by a specific person.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I propose that I draft a project plan and bring it to you for review” • “I don’t know what to do, so I propose 3 of us have a brainstorming session” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Maybe the HR team could look into that” • “It’d be great if someone could take care of that”
A specific timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I will present a draft plan at our meeting next Monday.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making it vague: “Anytime this week” or “as soon as I can”

An **agreement** is anything you agree to. You can make agreements with other people, or with yourself (I agree to wake up at 6am tomorrow and go to the gym). If a request or proposal is accepted, then it means you've made an agreement. You can read more about agreements [here](#).

Elements of an Agreement	Examples: Clear and Direct	Non-Examples: Vague
What will happen	We will meet for lunch...	We should get together...
When it will happen	At noon...	Sometime next week...
Who will be involved	With everyone on the team	With some of the old teammates...
How something will happen	Everyone will share updates on their projects and make requests for help where they want it.	(in non-examples, this is almost always unstated, and left to be assumed)

A **boundary** defines a limit and a consequence that will occur if that limit is passed. You don't need another's agreement to enforce a boundary.

Elements of a Boundary	Examples: Clear and Direct	Non-Examples: Rely on guilt or vague threats
A limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "If you don't share the project plan by Friday..." • "If you repeatedly call me after 6pm for non-urgent matters..." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I really need you to send that plan by Friday" • "Don't you hate getting work calls after you're home?"
A consequence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The team will not be available to assist on that project." • "I will block your number" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "If you don't, you won't get the best feedback...people might not have time to look at it in detail" • "The boss is going to be really upset" • "We're all going to have to do a bunch of work to cover for you."