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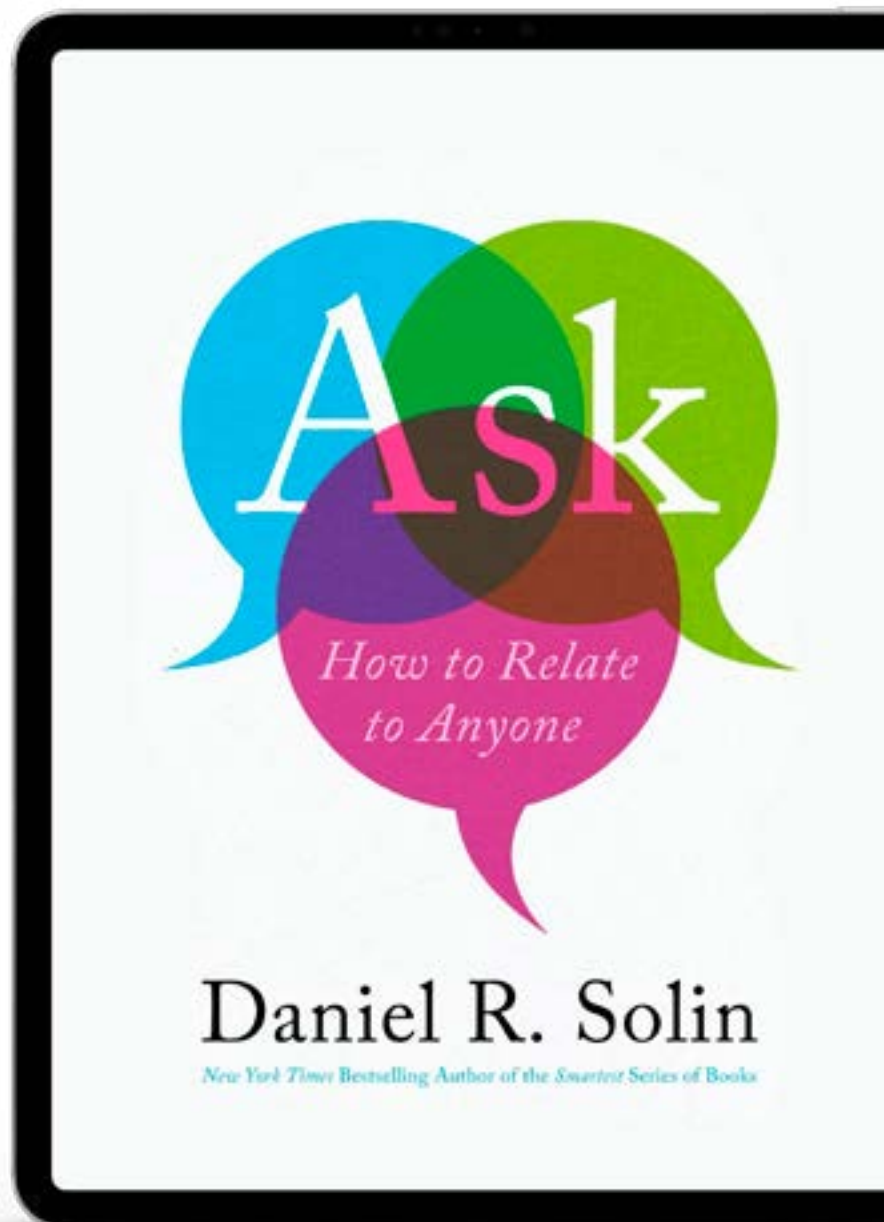
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## Meet the Author

Dan Solin is the New York Times bestselling author of the Smartest series of investing books and The Smartest Sales Book You'll Ever Read.

Dan's books have been widely praised by The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Library Journal, Vanguard co-founder John Bogle and many financial columnists, authors and others. He has appeared on The Early Show, The O'Reilly Factor, MSNBC's Week-end Economic Review, Fox Business and CNN's Money, and has been interviewed on many radio programs, including USA, CBS, ABC and on a number of regional NPR stations.

He has shared the research in Ask with thousands of people in North America, Europe and Australia.

Visit his website at: [askdansolin.com](http://askdansolin.com).



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## About Ask

Ask is a meticulously researched book, based on fascinating and compelling studies in the fields of psychology and neuroscience. New York Times bestselling author Dan Solin shows readers exactly how to make deeper connections with everyone.

The lessons in Ask are easy to understand and put into practice.

Here's the elevator pitch for Ask: Once you stop conveying information, and start eliciting it instead, the difference in your relationships will be immediate and transformational.

Ask will change the way people around the globe connect.



### DETAILS

**Full Title:** Ask: How to Relate to Anyone Page Count: 239

**Genre:** Self-improvement

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## Dan Discusses the Lessons in Ask



*Talk by Dan in  
Ottawa, Canada,  
June 9, 2015.*

# Preface

Ask is a journey we will take together.

Have you ever wondered why a meeting went so badly? Or why you have such trouble developing a meaningful relationship with certain people in your business and personal life? Or why you aren't more successful?

I've spent years researching those issues, motivated by my own experiences. Here's what I found.

It's not about us. It's not about trying to be witty, charming or entertaining. It's not about conveying information or demonstrating expertise. It's about listening to others and asking them questions.

I used to believe what I was saying was more important than what I was hearing. Instead of really listening, I was just waiting for the other person to stop talking. I had an agenda and was eager to convey it.

As a consequence, my interactions with others were like two billiard balls bouncing off each other. Making contact sometimes just drove the other person further away.

Do you ever have a similar feeling?

Then I did some research. What I found was stunning.

When we empower others to talk about themselves, the brain activity in those people is similar to when they're engaged in their most pleasurable activities. Talking about yourself releases certain hormones that make you feel good. Doing so causes you to project traits of likeability and trustworthiness onto the person who encourages you to talk.

Conversely, trying to persuade someone about anything releases cortisol, the stress hormone. Even worse, talking non-stop about anything for more than just a few minutes can make the other person feel diminished and trivialized. It can even cause them to experience the same hormonal response as when they are in physical pain.

Could improving relationships be as simple as talking less while empowering the other person to talk more? Could focusing on others in a genuine and sincere way, and getting them to talk about themselves, be the key? And if that's true, just how difficult is it for us to sublimate our egos, abandon our agenda, and implement these basic principles?

Compelling research is great, but can it be implemented in the real world?

## Preface *(continued)*

I've spent the past four years speaking about my findings to thousands of people all over the world. Initially, my audience was composed of investment advisors. They reported a massive increase (over \$1 billion in new assets under management) by using the basic principles discussed in this book. I then branched out and started speaking to those engaged in other businesses. Their response was similar.

Ask had a surprising collateral benefit. Many who implemented my findings told me their personal relationships with friends, family, and especially their children, were transformed.

Here's one particularly poignant example. After one of my talks, a member of the audience approached me and said he was about to go to lunch with his son. They had been estranged because the father wanted the son to become an investment advisor, and the son wanted to pursue a career as a musician. He asked if these principles would be effective in the context of the lunch. I told him I was confident he could change his relationship with his son by just asking thoughtful questions and putting aside his own agenda.

Later, he wrote me a touching e-mail, telling me the lunch went "great." All he did was ask his son questions about his music. He listened carefully to the responses, and then asked follow-up questions. His son spoke for almost all the time they were together. The father refrained from offering any advice.

At the end of the lunch, they embraced, and both were teary-eyed (as was I when I read his e-mail). They may never agree on the right career path, but they have newfound respect for each other. I've received this type of positive feedback hundreds of times.

In my own life, implementing my findings has increased my level of personal happiness and deepened my relationships. People project the nicest qualities onto me, like kindness, thoughtfulness and insight, whenever I encourage them to talk about themselves.

The next logical step in my journey was to share that research with everyone. So I began to write Ask.

If you're interested in reading the underlying studies, you can find them in the Endnotes. If you're reading the e-book version, you can click on the links for more details.

Before you turn the page to start learning about Ask, I want to share one caveat: what you'll find in Ask won't solve all your relationship issues. But implementing Ask will immediately transform those relationships you want to improve, and make every day of your life (and the lives of those with whom you interact) happier and more positive.

At the end of this journey, you really will be able to relate to anyone.



# Advance Praise for Ask

## *Excerpts from Kirkus Reviews*

...well constructed and elegantly written...

...entertaining, easy-to-read...

...Solin's deceptively simple premise is solid. Smart, succinct, and highly engaging.

[You can read the full review here.](#)

## *Excerpts From BlueInk Review*

...well-written, straightforward ode to letting others have their say.

...easy to read...

....in a world clambering with endless noise and jibber-jabber, Ask makes a rock-solid case for the power of simply keeping our mouths shut.

[You can read the full review here.](#)

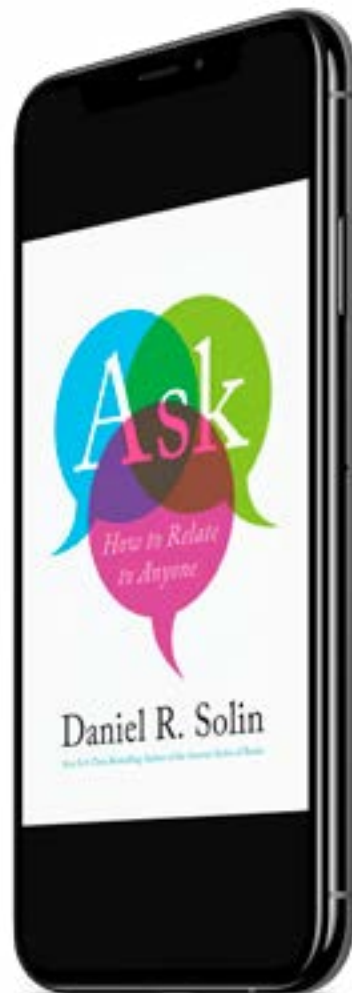
## *Excerpts From N.N. Light's Book Heaven*

This book isn't just an effective tool for business, it's a great tool for life.

\*\*\*

A remarkably original approach to self-help that will help anyone who picks up this book. A very good read and I recommend it to everyone.

[You can read the full review here.](#)



# Endorsements

*In my three-decade career that has centered on connecting with others, I've learned there's always more to learn about building relationships. Dan Solin is an accomplished and adept communicator whom I have known personally and professionally for more than 20 years. In Ask: How to Relate to Anyone, he blends real-life insights with peer-reviewed research to explain why becoming the most interested person in the room, instead of the most interesting, is the key to fostering stronger connections. For anyone seeking to master the art of building enduring relationships, consider this one of your essential guidebooks.*

**Dave Butler**

Co-CEO of Dimensional Fund Advisors LP

An engaging book that provides thoughtful, actionable, and perhaps most importantly, evidence-backed insights that reveal what each of us can do to improve our ability to relate to others.

**David Hoffeld**

Author of *The Science of Selling*

*Dan Solin's ASK: How to Relate to Anyone is a brilliant fusion of the academic and the actionable, of research findings and real-life strategies. Solin offers succinct, engaging summaries of findings from the fields of positive psychology, communication, and neuroscience. His genius lies in demonstrating Why and How those findings can be easily adopted by leaders, advisors, teachers and anyone else who strives to be of use to other human beings.*

**Moirá Somers, Ph.D., C.Psych.**

Author of *Advice that Sticks*

*I hope, with the help of your book that I can become a master ASKer because it truly is one of the most effective tools for effective communication that I've ever seen (and I've been in Communications professionally for 35 years). Wish I had had the book decades ago.*

**Jeffery Goddard**

CEO Executive Producer, TVA Media Group

*Dan uses solid research, presented in an accessible way, to lay out the steps everyone can take to improve their relationships and transform their lives.*

**Jocelyne Whitehead, Neuroscientist**



# Suggested Interview Questions

**Q.** What's the premise of Ask?

**A.** Ask shows you how to enter into conversations with a switch in emphasis from conveying information to eliciting it. Ask helps you abandon the goal of "educating" who you're talking with, demonstrating your expertise, or discussing your personal history.

Ask helps create a mindset where a conversation becomes an open-ended exploration about the person you're talking to that doesn't require persuasion or an outcome. Ask shows how you can engage the person you are speaking to through questions that get to the heart of the matter: them.

**Q.** What's the research on which Ask is based?

**A.** Hundreds of peer-reviewed studies in the fields of psychology and neuroscience. They are listed in extensive EndNotes

**Q.** When you were doing the research, did you have an "aha" moment when you uncovered a particular study?

**A.** Yes. A study from Harvard found we derive as much pleasure from talking about ourselves and we do from the most pleasurable human activities (like sex, gambling, fine wine etc.). That made me wonder: How would interactions change if we simply empowered people to talk about themselves?

**Q.** How does Ask compare to Dale Carnegie's How to Win Friends and Influence People?

**A.** I really believe Ask is the book Dale Carnegie would have written in 1936 if he had access to cutting edge imaging studies I relied upon. He was remarkably prescient.

**Q.** What if the other person isn't interested in answering questions, even those that empower them to speak about themselves?

**A.** This issue typically arises in a business context. When you implement Ask, you aren't trying to impose anything on anyone, including pressuring them to answer questions (regardless of how nicely phrased). If someone is reluctant to answer questions, pivot to this question (or something similar): What would you like to talk about?

Your goal is to find out their agenda and address it, not to insist on a particular format or topic of conversation.

**Q.** If I started asking questions of my spouse or partner, they would say "Why are you asking me so many questions?" How do I deal with that?

**A.** In all likelihood, they won't, assuming you are asking appropriate questions that reflect a genuine interest and not "cross-examining" them.

## Suggested Interview Questions *(continued)*

**Q.** In a business conversation, what if the other person just talks about themselves and I never get a chance to discuss my product or service?

**A.** In most situations, that won't happen. The other person is well aware of the reason the two of you are talking. If they have questions, at some point, they will ask them. When they do, you can be confident you are responding to an issue of concern, rather than assuming what you have to say is of interest to them.

In the unlikely event the conversation goes "nowhere," I like your chances of landing the business. From the perspective of the prospect, the time spent with you has been unique, meaningful and enjoyable. He or she will have very positive feelings about you.

Those feelings are what often translate into business.

**Q.** What's the biggest misunderstanding we have about communicating with others?

**A.** That they are interested in what we have to say. Most of the time, they aren't really listening. Instead, they are formulating their response to what we are saying to advance their agenda.

**Q.** What if the other person has read Ask and we are competing for who can ask the most questions?

**A.** The power of the principles in Ask are so potent the other person rarely wants to cede the floor. If you are fortunate enough to find someone who asks thoughtful questions, you will have a wonderful, mutually enjoyable conversation. It's unlikely to turn into a competition about who can ask the most questions.

**Q.** What are the most important things I can do right now?

**A.** Don't try to be the most interesting person in the room. Be the most interested.

Get in the habit of starting sentences with "I'm curious about \_\_\_\_\_"

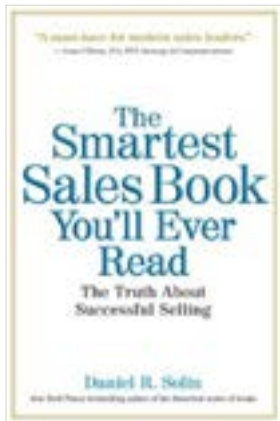
Use these five words more frequently: "Tell me more about that."

Retrain your brain to elicit information rather than convey it.

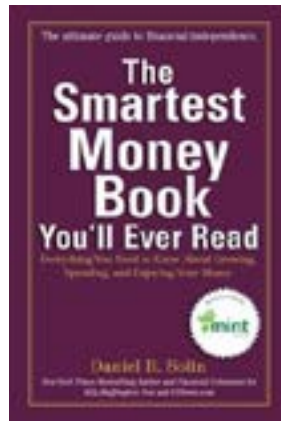
**Q.** What's the biggest impact Ask has had on those who implemented it?

**A.** When people implement the lessons in Ask, the most common feedback I get is that the experience was "transformational." It completely changes relationships and alters the perception others have of you.

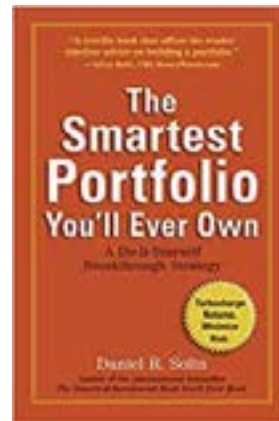
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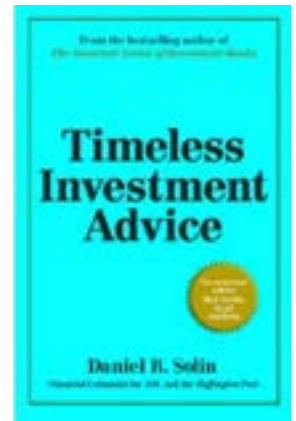
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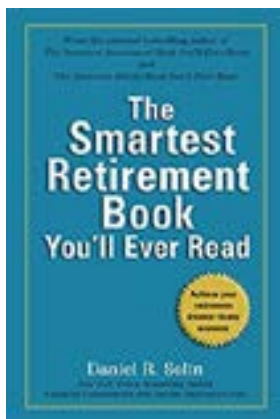
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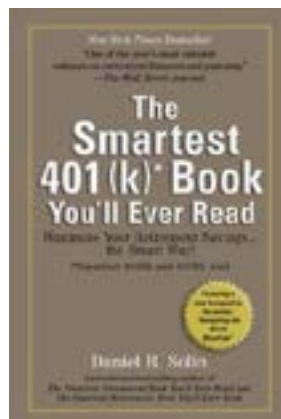
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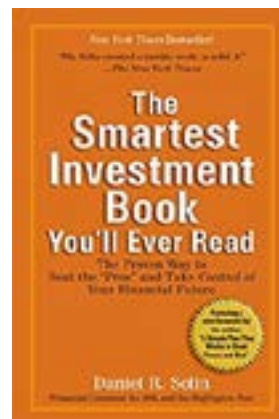
Timeless  
Investment  
Advice



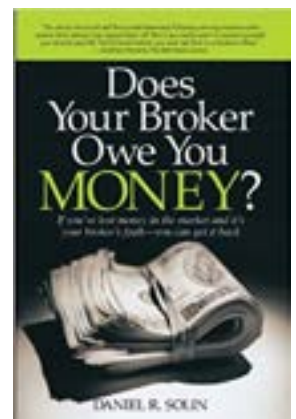
The Smartest  
Retirement Book  
You'll Ever Read



The Smartest  
401(k) Book You'll  
Ever Read



The Smartest  
Investment Book  
You'll Ever Read



Does Your Broker  
Owe You Money?