BETTER TO BEG FOR FORGIVENESS THAN ASK FOR PERMISSION
IT IS BETTER TO BEG FOR FORGIVENESS THAN ASK FOR PERMISSION

Dear friend,

If you want to live a more epic life, my simple suggestion: don’t ask for permission, JUST DO IT! knowing that you might piss off some people or upset other people. To be frank, the worst case scenario is that you might just “mildly annoy” others. And worst worst case scenario, you can always just ask/"beg" for forgiveness (most people will always forgive you, and even if they don't forgive you, that is OK as well).

Of course, sometimes it is good to ask for permission

A little nuance here:

Of course in some situations it is good to ask for permission. For example in street photography, sometimes asking for permission to make a portrait of someone is a good thing! There have been instances in which I ask for a street portrait from someone, and they say yes, and me and the stranger end up having a really nice conversation and interaction. Often the interactions I have in street photography by asking for permission is actually better than making interesting photos.

But in real life, for the most part, I would encourage you to not ask for permission, and take small risks in the things you want to experiment with or pursue in life.

Where do we get this desire to please others from?
I don’t know about you, but for myself, I’ve been socialized (and in a sense, brain washed) to thinking that to be a good human being is to not upset others, to be obedient to your parents, and be a “productive member of society”. American/British/Puritan values tell you not to yell too loud, not to step on the toes of others, and also be be “respectful”. In Asian Confucian values, “The nail that sticks out the most must be hammered in the hardest”, which means, “Don’t stick out, or else we will punish you. You must conform or we will cause you pain.”

It is in the best interests of society (and your parents) for you to listen, obey, and not rebel. But, the problem is that this just creates an abundance of generic human beings, who are domesticated, and simply sheep or lemmings who follow the herd/status-quo. It is my philosophical belief that we, as individuals, as risk takers, artists, and entrepreneurs must stand out from the herd, that we must assert our individuality, that we must follow our own inner voice and gut, and that we must devote our lives doing cool/epic shit!

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**Why conform?**

We conform to the rules of society because we fear pain. Most modern humans desire comfort, stability, and safety. But the problem is that in modern society, we have traded our wild side to become a tame, domesticated cow or animal. Would you rather be the free, wild wolf? Or the fat domesticated (and very bored) stay at home dog, who no longer needs to hunt for his food.

But once again, to become the fullest realized human being, you must disdain comfort, predictability, and “safety”. The Romans used to say that “Comfort is the road to waste”. And not only that, but too much regularity deprives us of good/beneficial stressors (eustress), which actually makes us stronger via the process of “hormesis”. We need a challenge, and we need (some) pain in order to evolve and become stronger versions of ourselves.
Why ask for permission?

Nassim Taleb has the theory that the reason why we ask others for their opinion is because just in case we fail, we have someone else to blame.

To be honest, we don't like to attribute failure to ourselves. Whenever we attempt something and fail, we blame something or someone else. We blame market conditions, we blame people who get in our way, we blame our lack of access to people, money or resources, or sometimes we blame our lack of “talent” (which means, we blame our parents for not giving us good genes).

I think we ask others for permission, because we’re afraid. We secretly hope to get rejected when asking for permission.

Because, if we actually do have the opportunity to do something (nobody prevents us from attempting something we want to do), we are afraid that we might attempt something and fail. Because if we fail, it somehow means that we are a defective, or inferior human being. We are afraid of wounding our own self ego, or our own self-esteem if we fail.

But I encourage you: fuck the fear of failure. If you attempt something in life (yet still fail), you are better than the 99.99% of other people out there who don't even have the courage or the guts to take a risk and try something new, innovative, or scary! To me, personal grandeur and “success” is measured via your appetite for risk and you actually attempting something big, instead of whether you make a bunch of money or are seen by others as “successful”.

To clarify, success isn’t about the payoff from your risk-taking. Rather, success is measured via the boldness of the actions you actually take in life!

You don’t need permission from anybody else (you only need your
So friend, don’t ask for permission in life. Instead, take risks in life. Do cool and bold shit. Don’t let fear of external failure hold you back. Rather, be like a child. Have fun, experiment, and attempt new things to see what you’re made of. Test yourself, and don’t worry about what others think.

Only measure success in your own eyes. Only let you judge yourself!

BE BOLD, ERIC