



TODD TOLSON

Speaks

Earning the Ask

Building Trust That Leads to Opportunity



Todd Tolson

Speaker • Trainer • Accessibility Strategist



Why Relationships Still Matter

In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to focus on making the sale, closing the deal, or securing the next opportunity. But lasting partnerships are rarely built through a single conversation—they are built through trust.

Whether you're working with employers, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, or community leaders, people want to know they can rely on you long before they decide to work with you.

Strong relationships don't happen by accident. They are created through consistent communication, genuine curiosity, and a willingness to understand another person's goals before presenting your own.

When people trust you, opportunities follow naturally. That's what I call earning the ask.



**“Focus on becoming a trusted resource,
not just another person asking for something.”**



The Earning the Ask Framework

When trust
has been established,
conversations naturally
lead to partnerships.

Deliver on your promises
and communicate consistently.

Offer value before
asking for a commitment.

Ask thoughtful questions and learn
what success looks like for them.

Understand the organization
before introducing your ideas.



Todd Tolson

Speaker • Trainer • Accessibility Strategist





Start with Their Mission

One of the biggest mistakes professionals make is leading with what they do instead of why it matters to the organization they're speaking with.

Before every meeting, ask yourself:

- What are their priorities?
- What challenges are they facing?
- What would success look like from their perspective?
- How can I help them achieve their goals?



When your conversation begins with their mission instead of your services, people become more open to collaboration.



Todd's Tip

People don't buy services.
They invest in solutions.





Demonstrate Value Before You Ask

This is where you shine.



Examples include:

Sharing a practical resource.

Offering a short demonstration.

Providing a sample.

Introducing a helpful connection.

Sharing an educational article.

Giving a presentation that solves a real problem.

Value builds credibility long before contracts are discussed.

The goal isn't to impress people. The goal is to make their job easier.

TODD TOLSON *Speaks*



Trust grows through consistent communication.

Simple habits make a significant difference:

- ☐ Follow up when you say you will.
- ☐ Respond promptly.
- ☐ Be honest about what you know—and what you don't.
- ☐ Celebrate your partners' successes.
- ☐ How can I become a long-term resource?

Relationships require attention long before they require a proposal.

 **Todd's Tip**
Your next opportunity often comes from
how well you support your current one.



Think Beyond the First "Yes"

The strongest partnerships continue long after a project ends.



Ask yourself:

- How can I continue adding value?
- Who else on their team could benefit?
- What future challenges might they face?
- How can I become a long-term resource?

Every successful project creates an opportunity for another conversation.



Todd's Tip

Your next opportunity often comes from how well you support your current one..



Todd Tolson

Speaker • Trainer • Accessibility Strategist

Relationships Create Community

Organizations often request support with:

Some of the most meaningful opportunities in my career didn't begin with a sales call. They began with conversations, volunteer work, community involvement, and a genuine desire to help others.

Whether serving on advisory councils, speaking at conferences, producing educational documentaries, or partnering with organizations, each relationship has reinforced an important lesson:

People remember how you made them feel long after they forget what you said.

Invest in people first. Business will often follow.



Todd Tolson

Speaker • Trainer • Accessibility Strategist





2026 Barry Levine Memorial Award for
Career Achievement in Audio Description

Blind Muse Foundation 501(c)(3)
Accessibility Strategist

Maryland State Rehabilitation Council
National speaker

Documentary producer
Government training



Todd Tolson

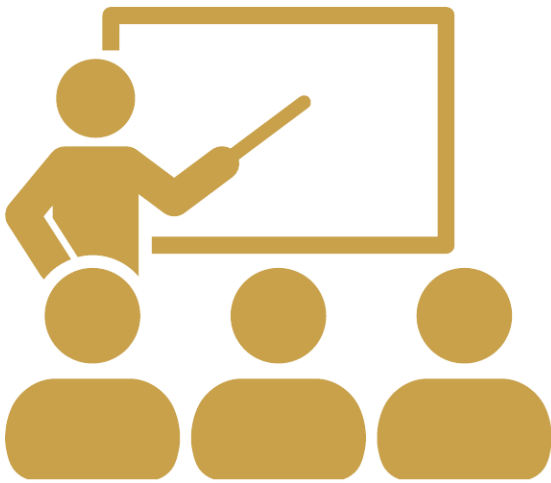
Speaker • Trainer • Accessibility Strategist

Continue the Conversation

Building trust isn't a one-time event—it's an ongoing investment. Whether your organization wants to strengthen employer partnerships, improve community engagement, or develop stronger communication strategies, the principles in this guide can be put into practice immediately.

Todd offers keynote presentations, interactive workshops, and customized training sessions that help organizations build authentic relationships, strengthen collaboration, and create lasting opportunities.

Ready to help your team earn the ask?



- Customized workshops for organizations and government agencies
- Conference keynote presentations
- Leadership and relationship-building training
- Employer engagement and partnership development
- Communication strategy consulting



ToddTolsonSpeaks.com

info@ToddTolsonSpeaks.com



Todd Tolson

Speaker • Trainer • Accessibility Strategist

