

Professor Russell James

How to have Biblical wealth
conversations that inspire major
gifts of assets

The scripture,
science, and
sentences

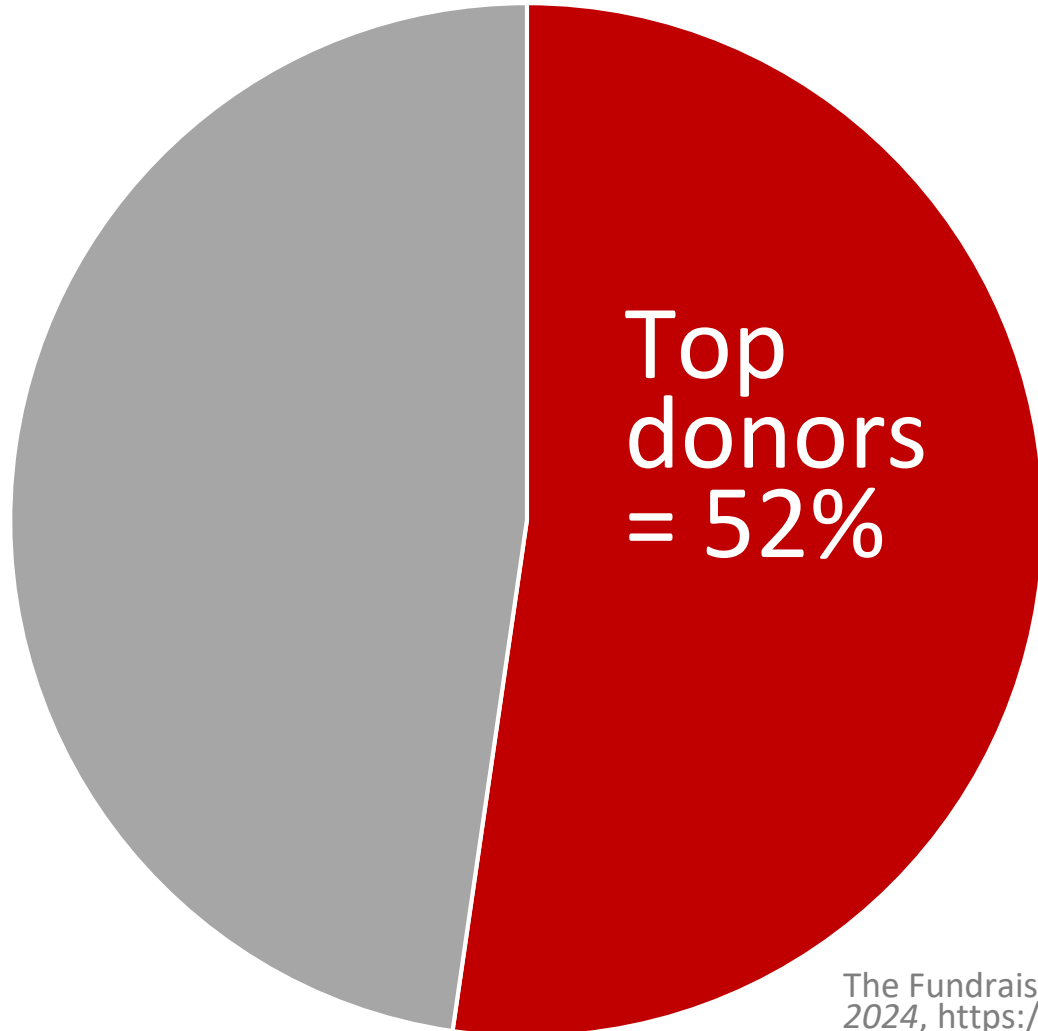
What's

MISSING

from
fundraising at
churches and
Christian
organizations?

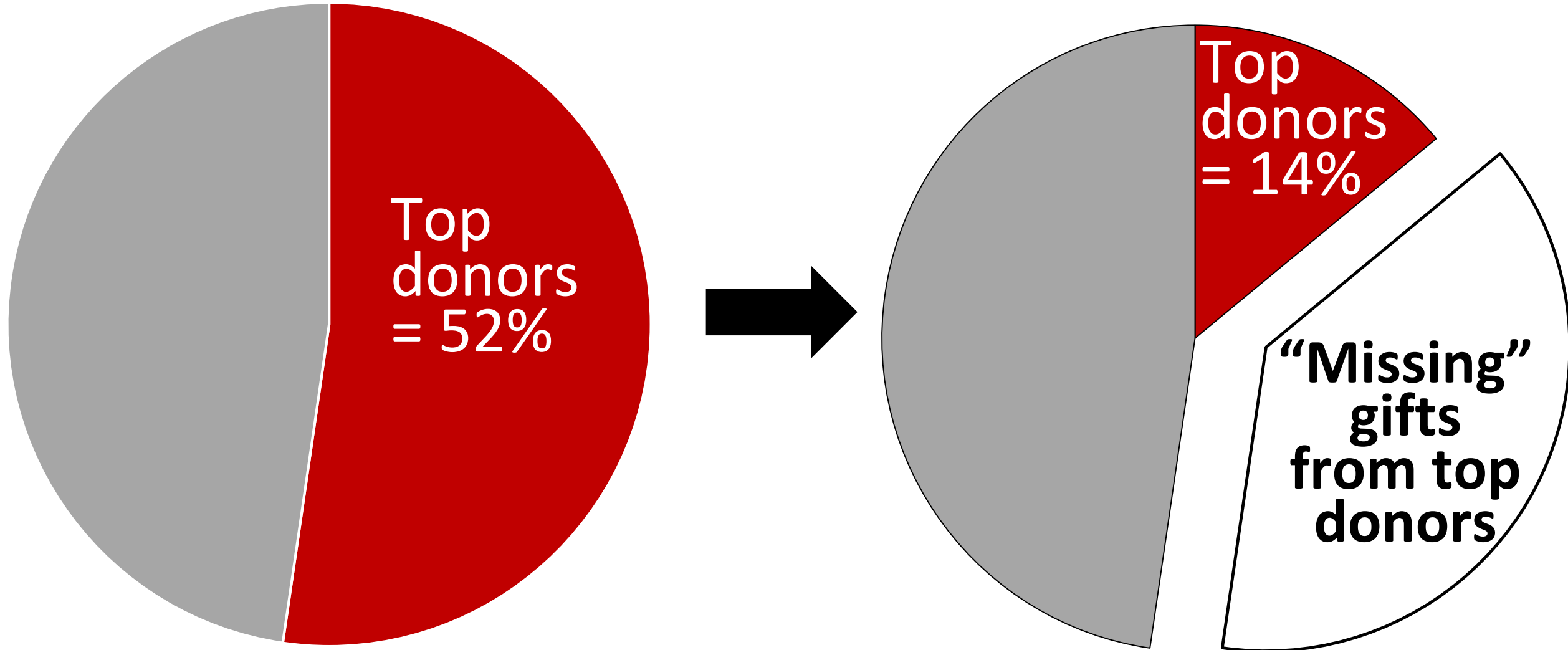


What does charitable giving in the U.S. normally look like?



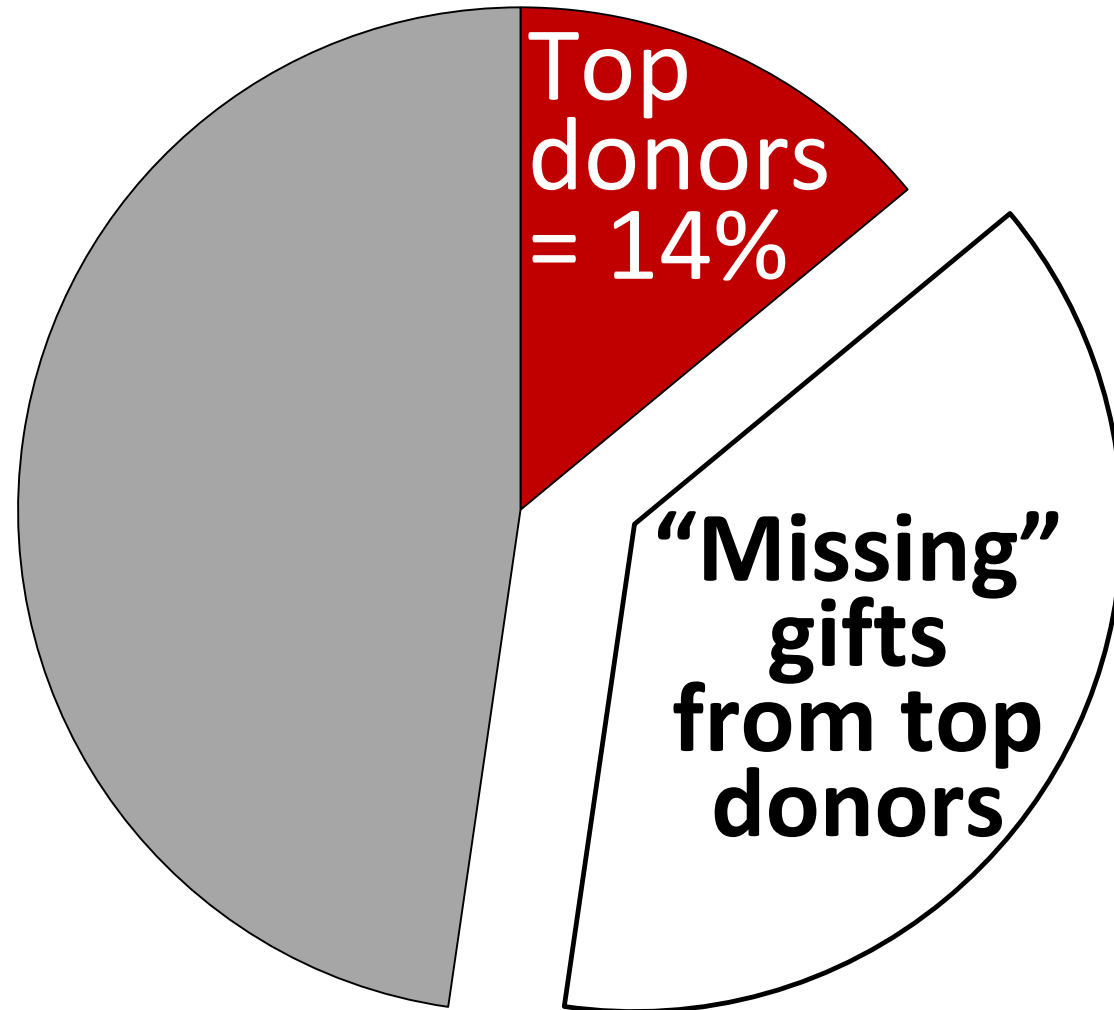
- Normally, the top 0.3% of donors provide about half of the money (51% in 2023; 52% in 2024)
- This comes from the giving data of 12,394 charities (2024)
- This is what fundraising charities normally experience

What would charitable giving look like if we removed most of the big donations?



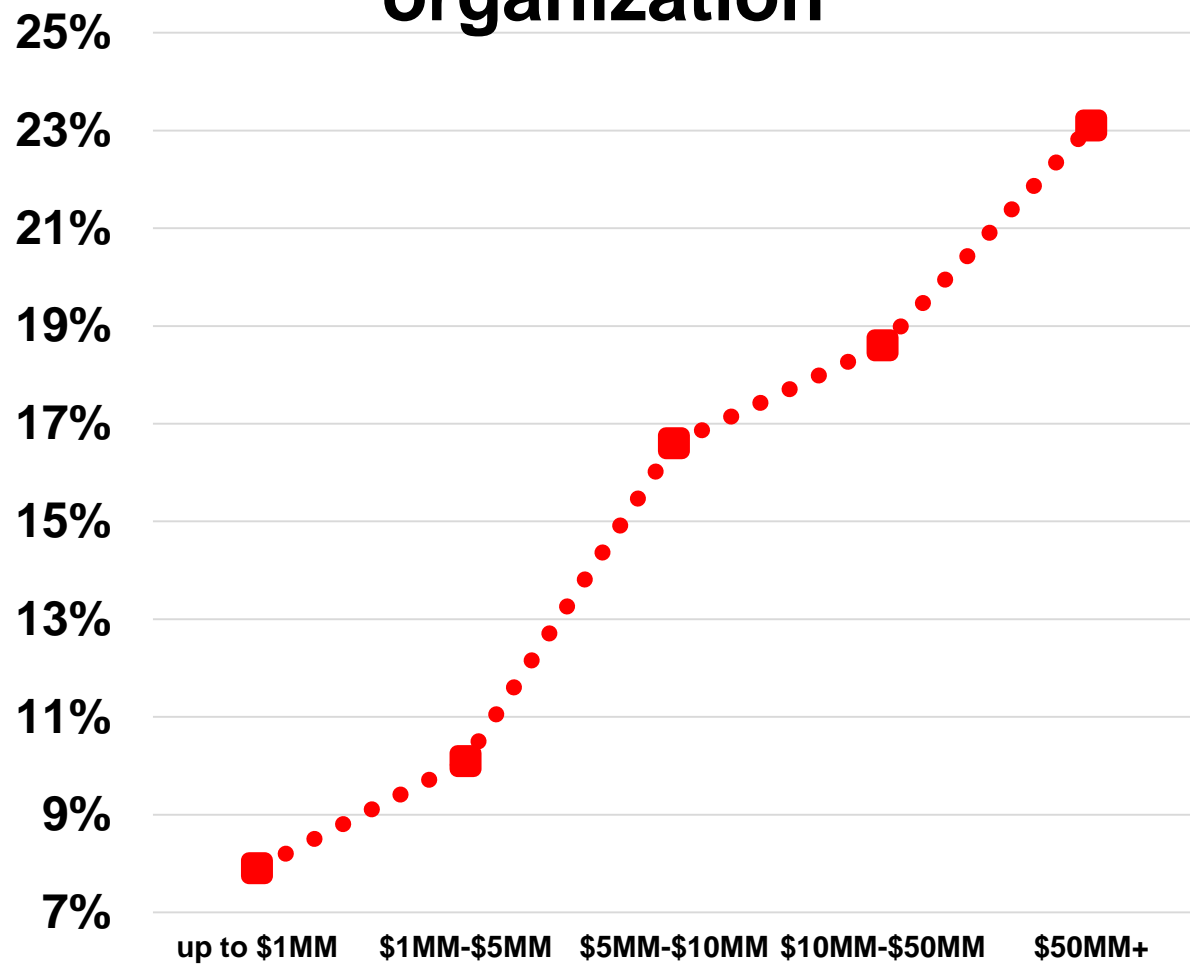
This is what charitable giving TO CHURCHES in the U.S. looks like

- Normally, the top 0.3% of donors provide just over half of the money.
- But in churches, that top 0.3% of donors provide only 14.4% of the money. (Even the top 1% of church donors provide only 19.6% of gift income.)



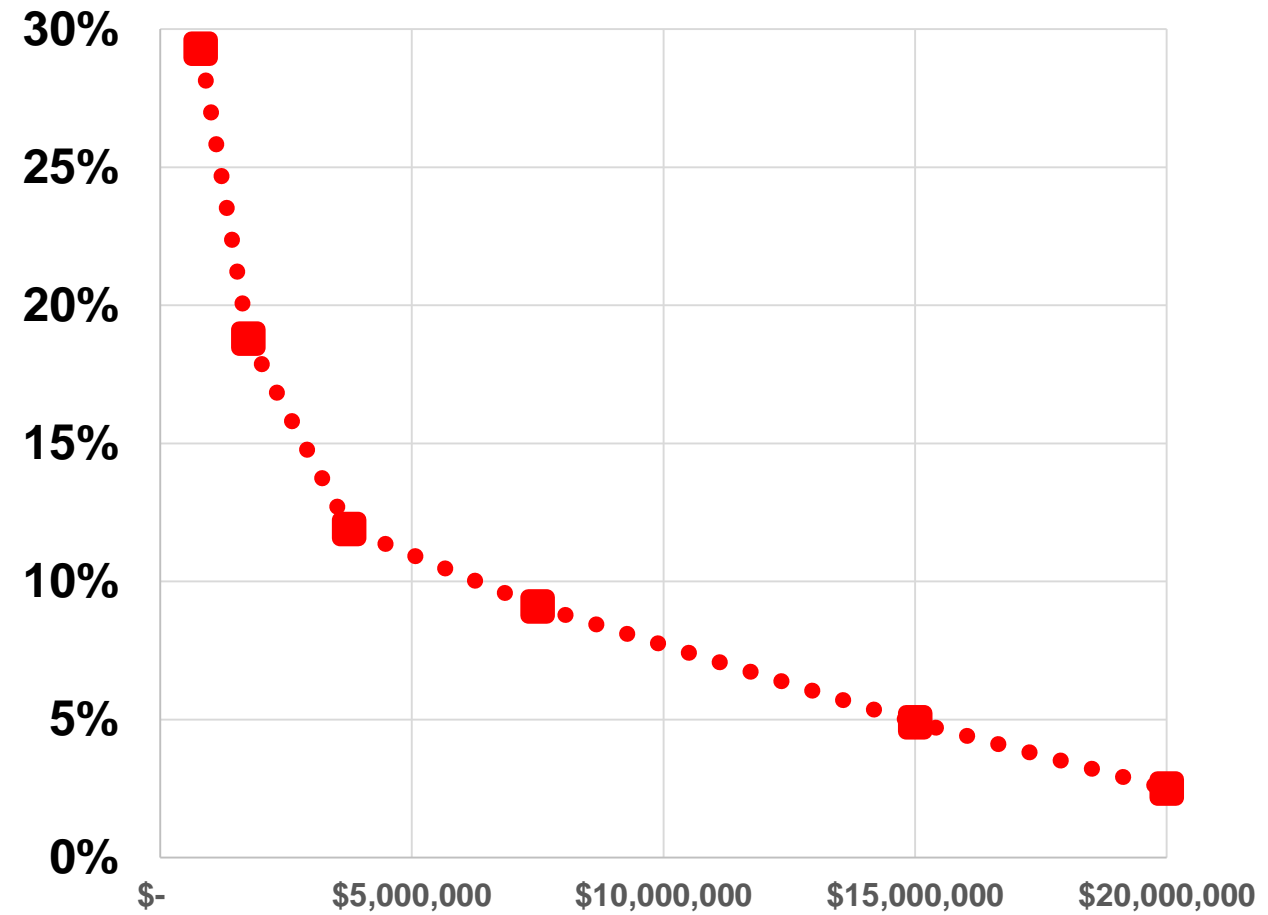
The missing dollars for religious organizations

Propensity to include estate gift to any religious organization



Estate Size (2023 constant dollars)
I.R.S., STATISTICS OF INCOME 1960: FIDUCIARY, GIFT, AND ESTATE TAX RETURNS 46-52 (1963)

Share of charitable estate dollars to religious organizations



Estate Size (2023 constant dollars)
J. Eller, M. B. (Spring, 2001). Charitable Bequests: Evidence from Federal Estate Tax Returns, 21 STAT. INCOME BULL.
174

The data shows what's missing

- Churches and religious organizations are good at getting small gifts. They are bad at getting large ones.
- They are even good at getting small gifts from wealthy donors. But they are bad at getting large gifts from wealthy donors.



What's missing?

- It's not that wealthy people aren't Christians. The majority of millionaires in the world are Christian.
- It's not that wealthy Christians don't make large gifts. They just don't make them to the church or religious organizations.
- These large gifts are missing. Something else is also missing ...



*Instruct **those who are rich in this present world** not to be conceited or to set their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy [. Instruct them] to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.*

The missing ministry of major gifts fundraising (1 Tim 6:17-19)

- A scriptural ministry focused on the wealth-holders
- A ministry often missing from the church



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The “offensive” ministry

THE PEOPLE GROUP

- Biblical fundraising is a **scriptural ministry** focused on the wealthy.
- It’s about wealth-sharing by the wealth holders.
- It’s about asset-sharing not income-sharing.

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The typical ministry

“Hi I’m Bob. I’m the new youth minister.”

“You’re the what?”

“The youth minister. I’ll be working with the young people in our church. I’ll also be working on programs to reach out to other young believers in the community to minister to them as well.”

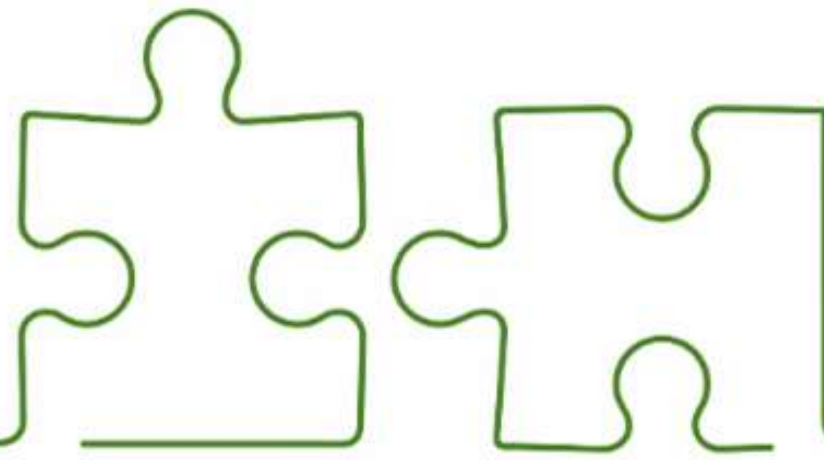
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The ~~typical~~ **offensive** ministry

“Hi I’m Bob. I’m the new ~~youth~~ minister **to the rich.**”

“You’re the what?”

“The ~~youth~~ minister **to the rich.** I’ll be working with the ~~young~~ **rich** people in our church. I’ll also be working on programs to reach out to other ~~young~~ **rich** believers in the community to minister to them as well.”



Paul and James match

- James warns against **breaking** community based on wealth. (James 2:2-4) “Make distinctions” [*diakrinō*]: literally means, “to separate throughout or wholly”
- Paul’s special ministry to the wealthy focuses on bringing the rich **into** community [*koinōnia*] through their sharing [*koinōnikous*]. (1 Tim 6:17-18).

Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to set their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy [. Instruct them] to do good, to be rich in good works, **to be generous and ready to share,** storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

Instructions on fundraising

- There are many passages in the Bible written to the giver. This is written to the one who's ministry is to encourage generosity in others: It's written to the fundraiser!
- Paul is outlining for Timothy the scriptural ministry of major gifts fundraising. *The Voice* begins with "Here's what you say ..."

Instruct those who are
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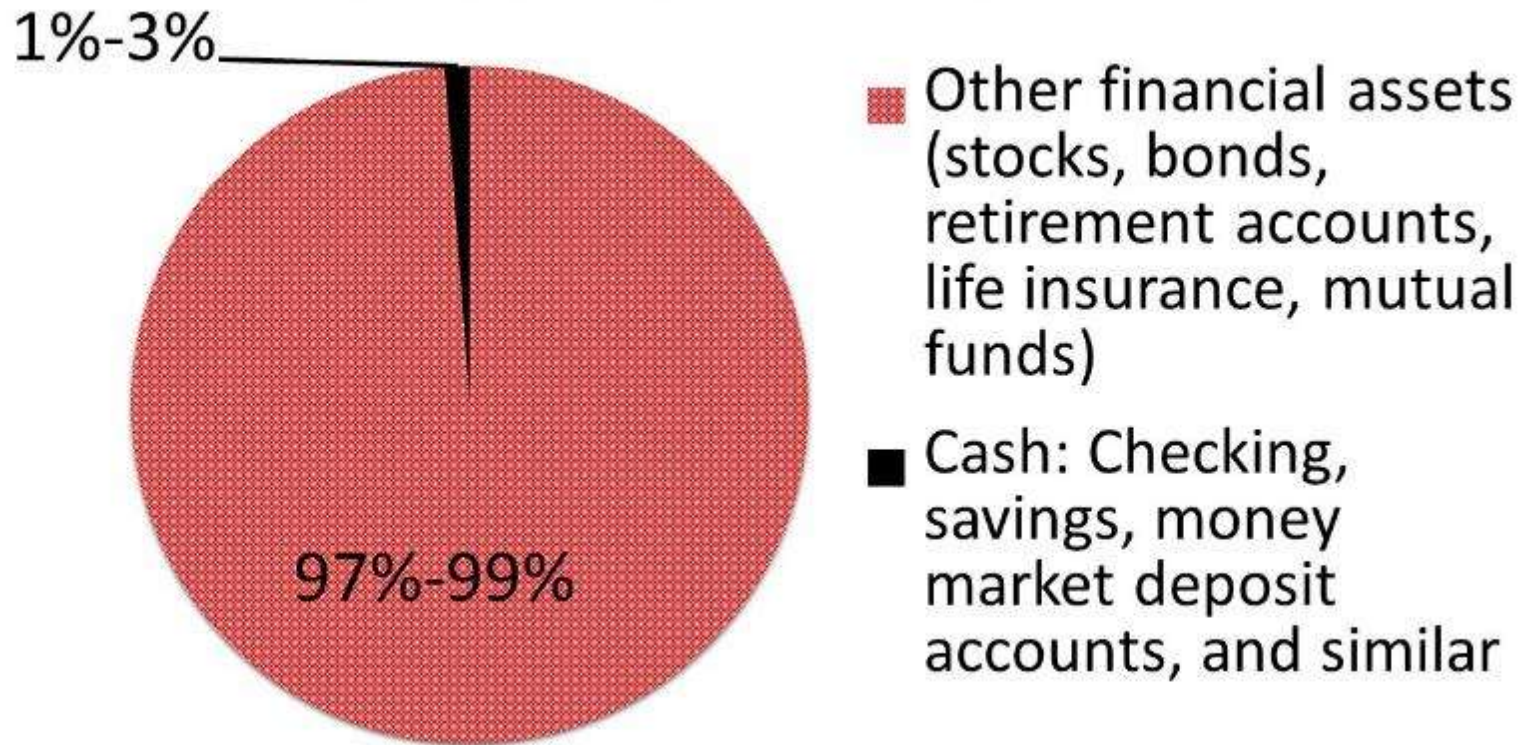
Let's talk about wealth!

- Biblical fundraising immediately talks about donors' wealth.
 - It's one sentence in the Greek with 7 or 8 references to accumulated wealth. This is not income.
- Ordinary fundraising fears wealth conversations and stays stuck in the realm of disposable income decisions.

Wealth is not money. Wealth is appreciated assets. Wealth sharing is not money-sharing. It's asset-sharing.

Financial assets held by families (U.S. Census 2017)

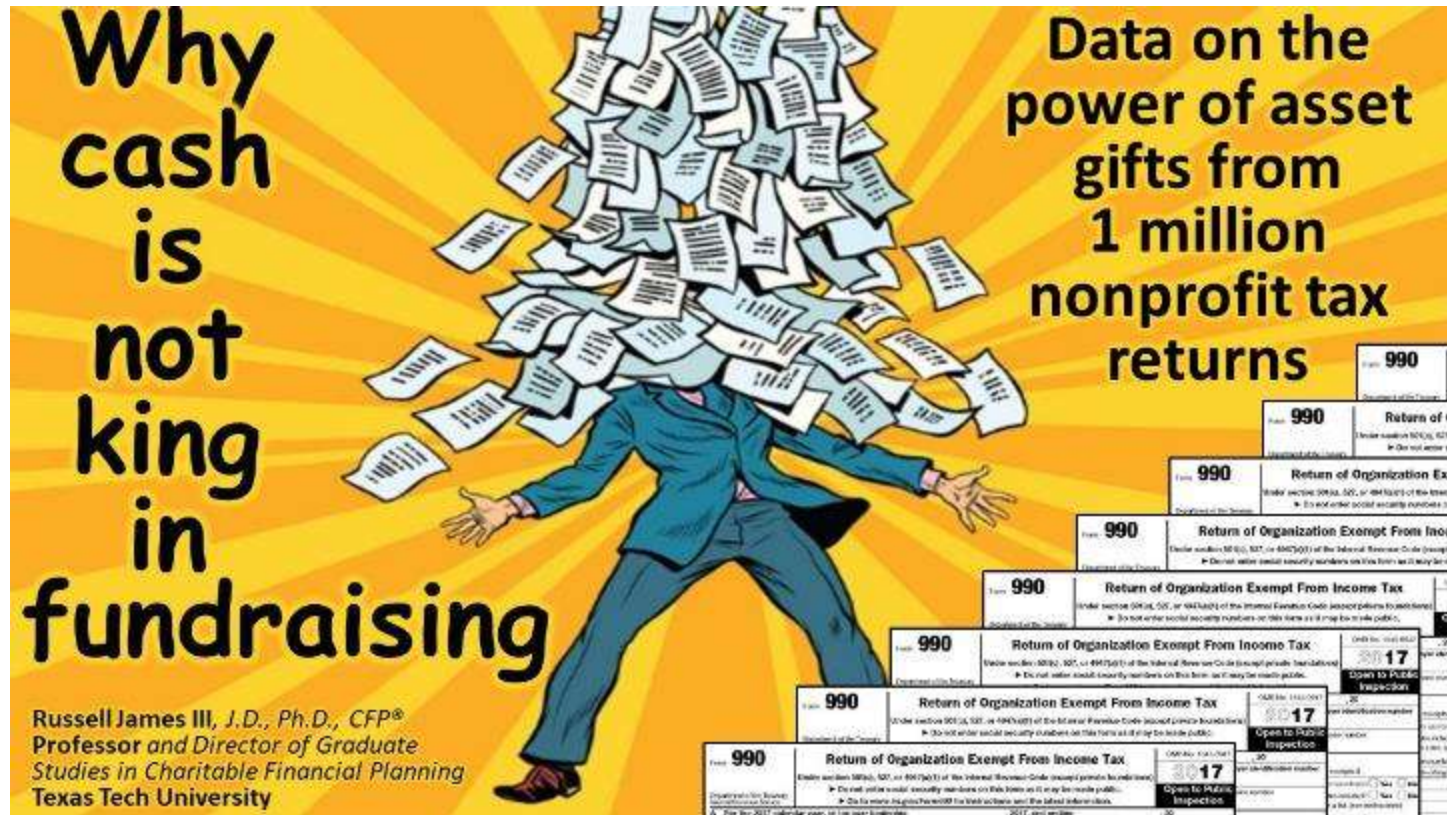
<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/wealth/2013/wealth-asset-ownership/wealth-tables-2013.xlsx>



- The story of wealth is the story of appreciated assets
- Less than 3% of household wealth is held in cash or checking accounts

Instruct those who are **rich** in this present world not to be conceited or to set their hope on the uncertainty of **riches**, but on God, who **richly** supplies us with all things to enjoy [. Instruct them] to do good, to be **rich** in good works, to be generous and ready to share, **storing up** for themselves the **treasure** of a good **foundation** for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

The single biggest transformation you can make with a donor is to get them to consider their **WEALTH** (not just their disposable income) as donation relevant.



James III, R. N. (2018). Cash is not king for fundraising: Gifts of noncash assets predict current and future contributions growth. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*. 29(2), 159-179.

Real world: Money categories and fundraising success

A study of over 1,000,000 nonprofit tax returns showed the answer: Raising money from noncash assets predicts current and future fundraising success

5-year growth in **total** fundraising

NONPROFITS
receiving
ONLY
CASH
gifts

2,548 nonprofits raising \$1MM+
in 2010 reported only cash gifts
in 2010 & 2015 on e-file IRS-990

GROWTH

Typical
disposable
income gifts

Gifts of
wealth

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5-year growth in **total** fundraising

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11%
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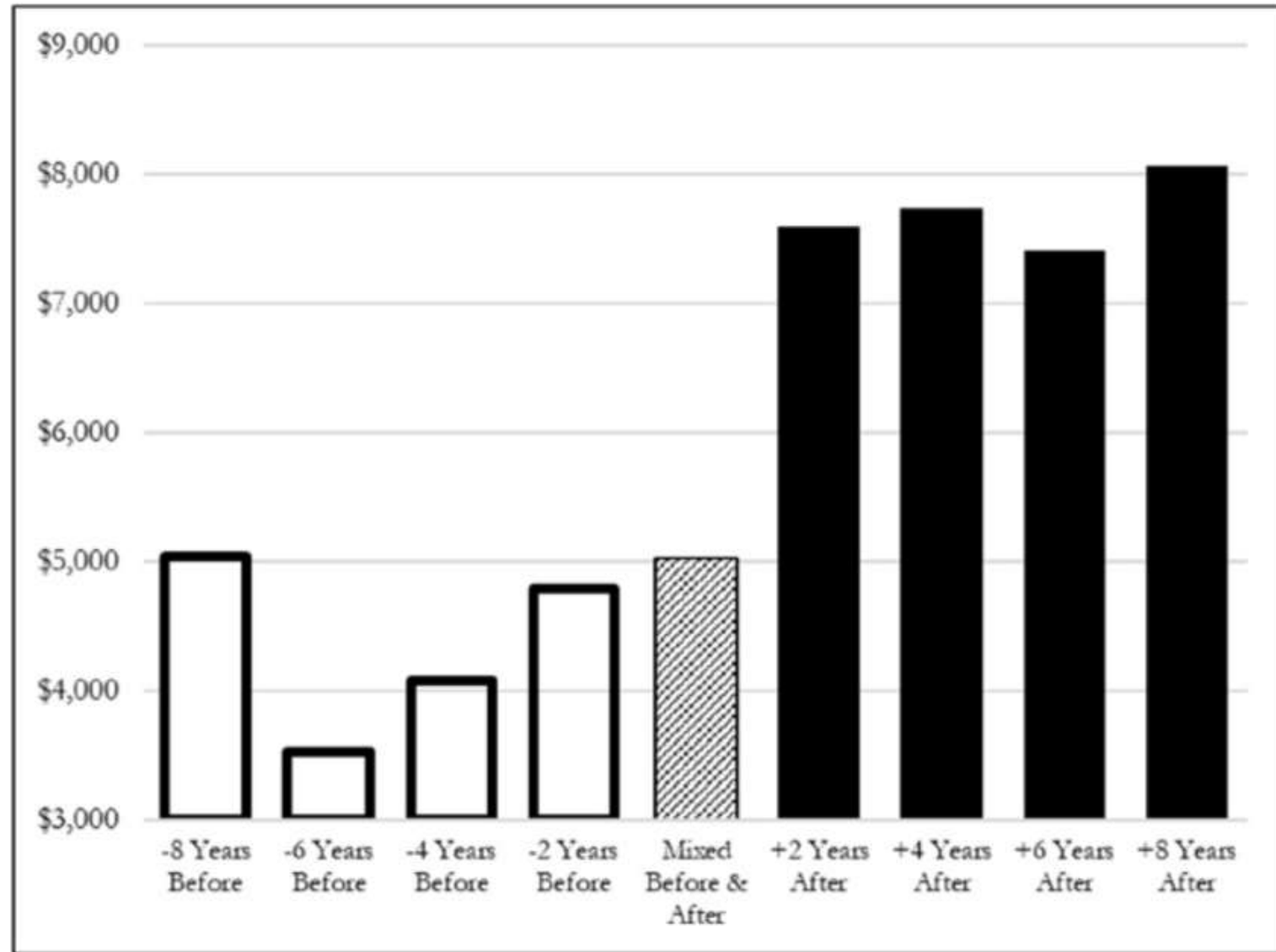
2,143 nonprofits raising \$1MM+
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66%
GROWTH

The first time most people ever commit to a gift from their wealth (not income) is in their estate plan

- Estate planning is end-of-life wealth planning
- Jump back a few sentences: “For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it, either.” 1 Tim 6:7

Figure 1. Average Annual Charitable Donations Before and After Adding Charity to an Estate Plan



James, R. N. III. (2020). The emerging potential of longitudinal empirical research in estate planning: Examples from charitable bequests. *UC Davis Law Review*, 53, 2397-2431 at p. 2422.

A spiritual issue: Understanding the bad steward

- There are two types of bad stewards: The bingeing bad steward and the burying bad steward
- Church financial stewardship teaching is almost exclusively focused on preventing the bingeing bad steward
- Jesus told more stories about the burying bad steward
 - Parable of the Talents
 - Parable of the Minas
 - Parable of the Rich Fool



A spiritual issue: Income sharing doesn't help

- Suppose a person is being the burying bad steward. They've been richly blessed with wealth and their plan is to bury it and die with it.
- But then we convince them to share 10% of their income. Yay! Or maybe it's 30% or even 50%. Woohoo!
- And how does that affect their buried wealth?

It doesn't.



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Let's talk about wealth!

Don't just share donor stories. Share donor stories about gifts of assets!

“and they would sell their property [*ktēmata*] and possessions [*hyparxeis*] and share them with all” (Acts 2:45); “For from time to time those who owned land [*chōriōn*] or houses [*oikiōn*] sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet,” (Acts 4:35 NIV)

- *Ktēmata*: A piece of landed property, a field, possessions
- *Hyparxeis*: Possessions, goods, wealth, property
- *Chōriōn*: A place, piece of land, field, property, estate
- *Oikiōn*: A house; property, wealth, goods

Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to set their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy [. Instruct them] to do good, to be rich in good
[kalois]
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[ergois], to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

Let's talk about wealth!

Don't just share donor stories. Share donor stories about major gifts of assets!

- “Now Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means Son of Encouragement), owned a tract of land [*agroŭ*]. So he sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.” Acts 4:36-37
- Mary of Bethany “came with an alabaster vial of very expensive perfume of pure nard. She broke the vial and poured the perfume over His head... this perfume could have been sold for over three hundred denarii ... She has done a good work [*kalon ergon*] for Me.” Mark 14:3,5,6

Don't just tell donor stories.
Tell asset donor stories.
Tell many of them.

Notice the variety
of assets in the
donor stories!

Oikiōn: A house;
property,
wealth, goods

Agrou: A field; the
country, lands,
property in land, a
country estate

Hyparxeis:
Possessions,
goods, wealth,
property

Ktēmata: A piece
of landed
property, a field,
possessions

Chōriōn: A place,
piece of land,
field, property,
estate

Perfume that “could
have been sold for
over three hundred
denarii”

I give presentations on major gifts of assets (planned giving) across the country

- There are fundraisers from every kind of nonprofit.
- Except one.
- There are no churches. There are no stewardship ministers. There are no executive pastors.



But I'm afraid!

- I'm not comfortable talking to wealth holders about their wealth.
- I don't know anything about wealth, wealth management, or assets.
- I don't know about capital gains taxes, closely-held stock, real estate trusts, private foundations, charitable remainder trusts, charitable lead trusts, or estate planning.





Learning new things is required when reaching out to any new people group

- We're not called only to minister to those who are like us
- And the learning is free.
<http://bit.ly/TexasTechProfessor>
- It's a scriptural ministry. And it's missing. The economic and spiritual consequences are devastating.
- You can fix this! Embrace this missing ministry!



The Secret to Fundraising Math

Gifts of Wealth Not Disposable Income

Professor Russell James
Texas Tech University

The secret
Major gifts are
gifts of wealth,
not disposable
income





Wealth is
not income

- Wealth doesn't come from a paycheck
- Wealth comes from owning assets that go up in value

Wealth is appreciated assets

Buy assets with inheritance,
borrowings, or savings from income

1. Pick the right assets (risk)
2. Use personal effort to increase asset value (work)



Gates, Buffet, and your neighbor

Wealth comes from owning
assets that go up in value

- Pick the right assets (risk)
- Use personal effort to
increase asset value (work)



Guess the answer!

According to Census data, what percentage of financial assets (not real estate) are held in cash, checking accounts, money market accounts and similar accounts?

A) 3%

B) 10%

C) 15%

D) 25%

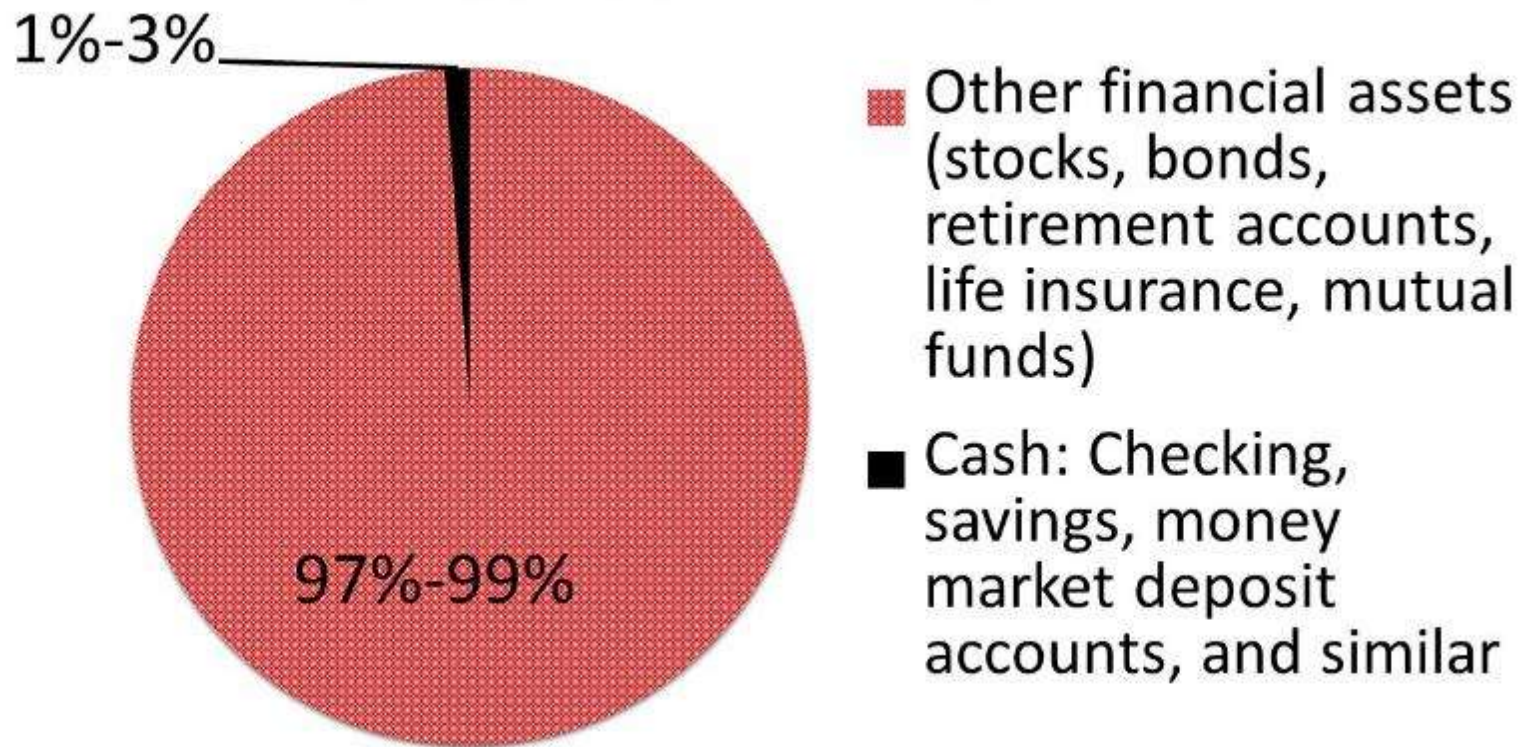
E) 33%



Wealth is a different money category

Financial assets held by families (U.S. Census 2017)

<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/wealth/2013/wealth-asset-ownership/wealth-tables-2013.xlsx>



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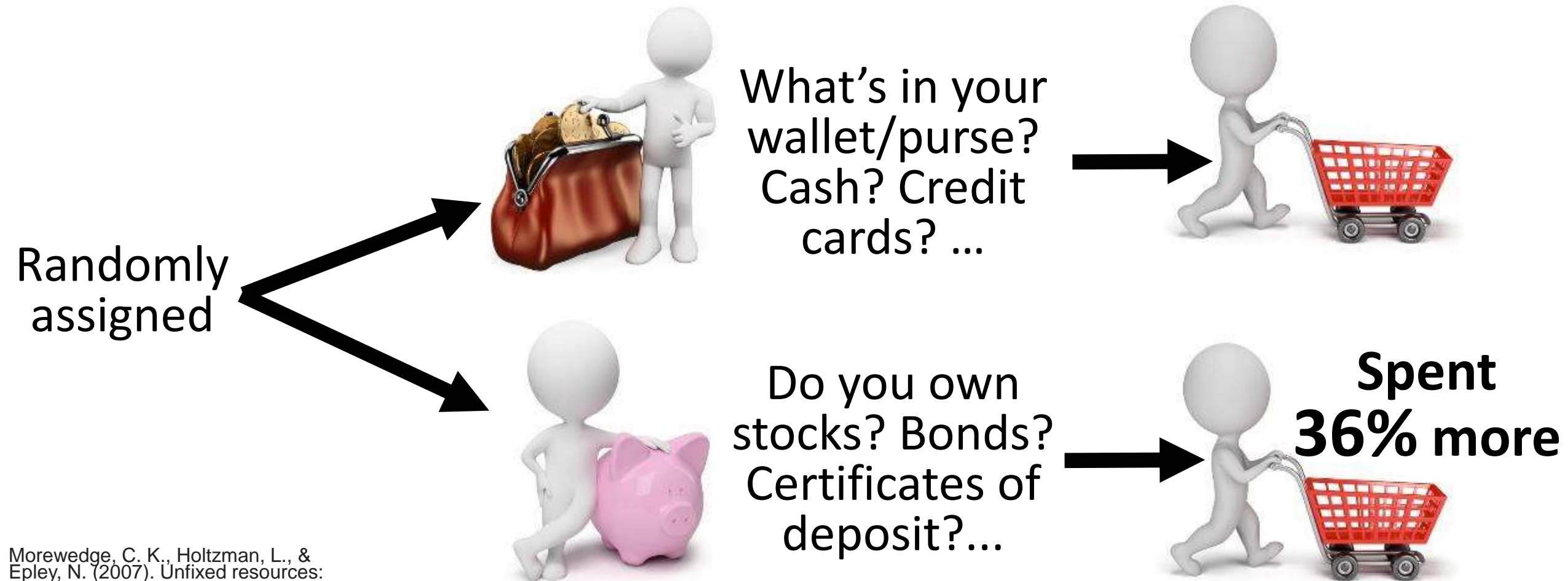


Gift size is
relative to the
money category

- Asking for cash is asking from the small bucket
- Asking for appreciated assets is asking from the big bucket
- Large gifts are made possible by large reference points

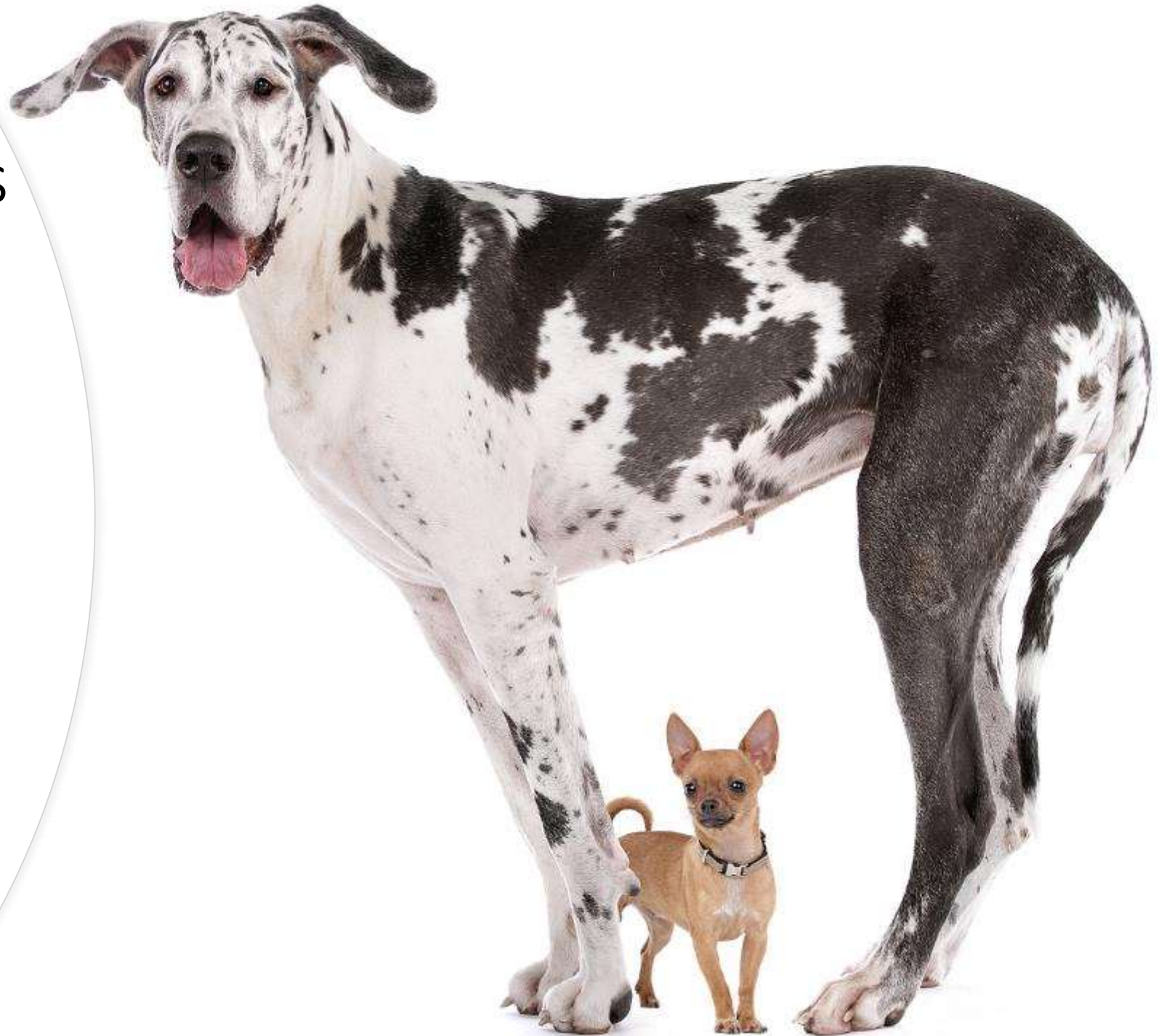
Money categories change behavior

Shoppers entering Broadway Market in Cambridge, MA



Money categories change current donations

- A small ask from a small category works
- A big ask from a small category does not work
- A big ask from a big category works



Which gift is more valuable?

A \$10,000 check vs.
\$10,000 of stock shares

One gift is more hassle for the nonprofit, but it costs the donor less (avoiding capital gains taxes)



A money category answer

A \$10,000 check vs.

\$10,000 of stock shares

If gifting comes from the tiny category, future gifting stays tiny

- A checking account is where disposable income lives
- Appreciated assets is where wealth lives



“Mental accounting”

- In math, a dollar is a dollar
- In story, people put labels on money and then treat the dollars differently based on those labels
- When a new category of money becomes donation relevant, giving increases



Thaler, R. (1985). Mental accounting and consumer choice. *Marketing Science*, 4(3), 199–214; LaBarge, M. C., & Stinson, J. L. (2014). The role of mental budgeting in philanthropic decision-making. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 43(6), 993–1013.

Making the category donation-relevant

After a first gift of furniture or clothes **[or stock]**, the category becomes donation relevant

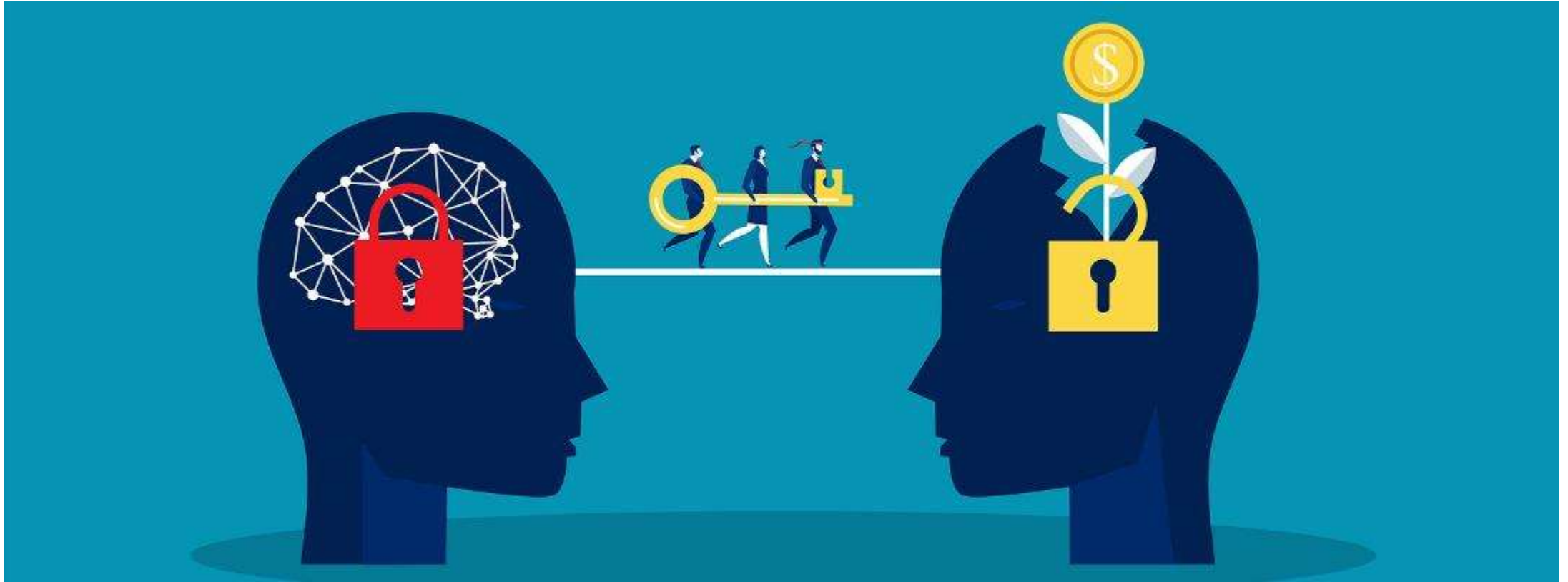
Whenever redecorating or moving **[or an asset sale]**, is contemplated, charity comes to mind





How to start

- Listen: An upcoming sale, retirement, inheritance are all times for charitable planning.
- Be a resource: I help our donors give smarter. How? Share a story.
- Share stories: Donor stories can include stocks, bonds, real estate, or businesses.



Mindset
matters

- Gifts from disposable income stay small.
- Once a donor begins to think of donations as something that comes from wealth, things change!



Socratic Fundraising Setting

Is This the Land of
Wealth Sharing?



“Advance the donor’s
hero story”

- That’s the right story
- But for major gifts, we also
need the right setting

Major gift setting: Is this the land of wealth sharing?

- In story, setting matters. It creates expectations. It defines appropriate behaviors.
- Are we in a fantasy realm? Then we're open to fantasy events. Are we in the Old West? Then we expect Old West things.



Major gift setting: Is this the land of wealth sharing?

In fundraising, setting matters

- Typical gifts are gifts of disposable income
- Major gifts are gifts of wealth



Establish the setting

Getting donors to talk about their wealth - their business or investments

- Can encourage generosity
- Can reveal capacity (assets)
- Can reveal plans to buy or sell, acquire, or retire, which create opportunities for creative solutions



The fundraiser archetype

In the universal hero story, a guiding sage helps the hero

The guiding sage:

- Gives advice, planning, and guidance
- Introduces the hero to friends and allies
- Provides a magical instrument or weapon



The fundraiser archetype in the donor's hero story



The effective fundraiser can be the guiding sage for the donor's hero story

- Gives advice, planning, and guidance
- Introduces the hero to friends and allies (technical experts, past donors)
- Provides a magical instrument or weapon (gift instruments and agreements)

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The authorized advisor

THE RELATIONSHIP: Instruct [*parangelle*]

- Biblical fundraising comes alongside [*para*] the wealthy, in a sincere relationship of ministry, to deliver an authorized message [*angelle*] about generosity.
 - Instruct [*parangelle*] in a military context is “command.” In your ministry context, it likely isn’t. In his own fundraising appeal, Paul writes “I am not saying this as a command” (2 Cor 8:8)
- Ordinary fundraising begs from below, attacks from above, or avoids the wealthy.
 - Begging pairs with almsgiving (small gifts).
 - Advising (coming alongside to deliver an authorized message about creating good works and sharing) pairs with major, life investment gifts.



The fundraiser archetype

- Socratic inquiry reveals what fits each donor's specific journey
- For major gifts, the guiding-sage fundraiser should ask about assets

Let's talk about wealth



1. It creates a setting of wealth sharing
2. It uncovers capacity for a major gift
3. It reveals opportunities for creative solutions
4. It leads to the next meeting that shares these creative options



Opportunities for creative solutions

A donor

- Is planning to sell an appreciated asset [*Charitable planning avoids capital gains taxes*]
- Is not planning to sell appreciated stocks [*“charitable swap”*]
- Is getting ready to retire [*CRT/CGA*]
- Is taking retirement account distributions [*QCD*]

Opportunities for creative solutions

A donor

- Has a big income spike [*DAF, RLE, CGA, grantor CLT*]
- Can't use tax deductions [*QCD, Appreciated assets, CLT*]
- Has kids who don't want to take over the farm or a vacation home [*RLE*]
- Has estate tax issues [*CLT*]
- Has wealth tied up in illiquid assets [*flip-CRUT; NIMCRUT*]



Let's talk about wealth



1. It creates a setting of wealth sharing
2. It reveals capacity for a major gift
3. It shows situations that connect with solutions
4. It leads to the next meeting that shares these creative options

Start social then follow up

- Social, emotional language encourages sharing
- Social phrasing elicits more information
- “People are more forthcoming when you ask questions in a casual way, rather than in a buttoned-up, official tone”*



*Brooks, A. W., & John, L. K. (2018). The surprising power of questions. *Harvard Business Review*, 96(3), 60-67.

Start social then follow up

“How’s business?”

“How’s the market been treating you?”

- The magic comes from the follow-up questions
- These show shared interests and reveal opportunities to provide advice





Tell me a story: Past, present, and future

Assets have stories

- Past: Origins of the asset
- Present: What's happening now
- Future: Future plans for the asset

Uncovering this story → Charitable planning opportunities

Questions can lead the donor through their asset story

Past

- “What’s the story of your business? How did you get started?”

Present

- “What are you proudest of?”
- “What are you most excited about at the current time?”





Future sale or transfer

- “What are your future plans for your business?”
 - “What will that mean to you?”
- “Have you thought about using the sale or transition of your business as an opportunity to achieve some of your charitable goals in addition to financial goals?”

Future estate transfer?

- “Will your heirs continue running the business?”
- “I know there are some smart ways to avoid taxes for people like you who want to include a gift to charity in their plans. Have you ever considered that?”





The END of the past-present-future asset story matches the START of our conversation

- The 1 Timothy 6 wealth conversation starts with “For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it, either.” 1 Tim 6:7
- Moving us towards the core wealth message. “Don’t bury it and die with it! That’s foolish. Instead, enjoy it by using it to do good and be rich in beautiful good works.”

Other assets?



- “Are you a collector (art, stamps, coins, etc.)?” “What is the story? How did you get started?”
- “Do you invest in Real Estate?” “How did you get started?”
- “Where do you vacation?” “Do you own a home there?”
- “How has the market been treating you?” “What is your investment philosophy?” “What’s the best investment you ever made? Tell me that story.”



Past to present to CHARITABLE future

“Have you considered making gifts with assets instead of cash?”

“Most donors giving at your level use appreciated assets instead of cash because they get a double tax benefit. Have you ever considered giving in that way?”

“How?” questions

“Why?” questions uncover connections to the donor’s people, values, and history

“How?” questions uncover wealth:

- *“You’ve done so much for [charity]. What allows you to be so generous?”*
- *“How were you able to make this wonderful gift?”**



*Rice, Dan. (October, 2009). *Asking for principal gifts – 5 approaches*. Presented at the National Conference on Philanthropic Planning, October 14-17, National Harbor, MD. p. 2.

From “How?” to wealth conversations

1. What makes it possible for you to make this generous cash gift?
2. Have you ever given something other than cash to a charitable organization?
3. Are you planning to sell something this year that is worth more than you paid for it?





Reverse questions

A statement triggers a question:

“I help donors give smarter.”

→ “How do you do that?”

“I help people give weird assets to [charity].”

→ “What’s the weirdest asset someone has given?”

This gives permission to share a story

Their question gives
you permission to
share a story

Your story

- Your advice helps someone like the donor
- They give an asset instead of cash

Ends with a question

- “Have you ever made any unusual investments?”
- “Have you ever been hit with capital gains taxes?”



Follow-up questions

“Have you ever made any unusual investments?”

- Yes? Ask about it. “Has it gone up in value?”
- No? Ask about it. “So, do you like stocks or bonds or something else?”



Follow-up questions

“Have you ever been hit with capital gains taxes?”

- Yes? Ask about it. “That must mean you were good at investing! Tell me what happened!”
- No? Ask about it. “That’s smart. It’s good to avoid those as long as you can. Do you think it might be a problem in the future?”



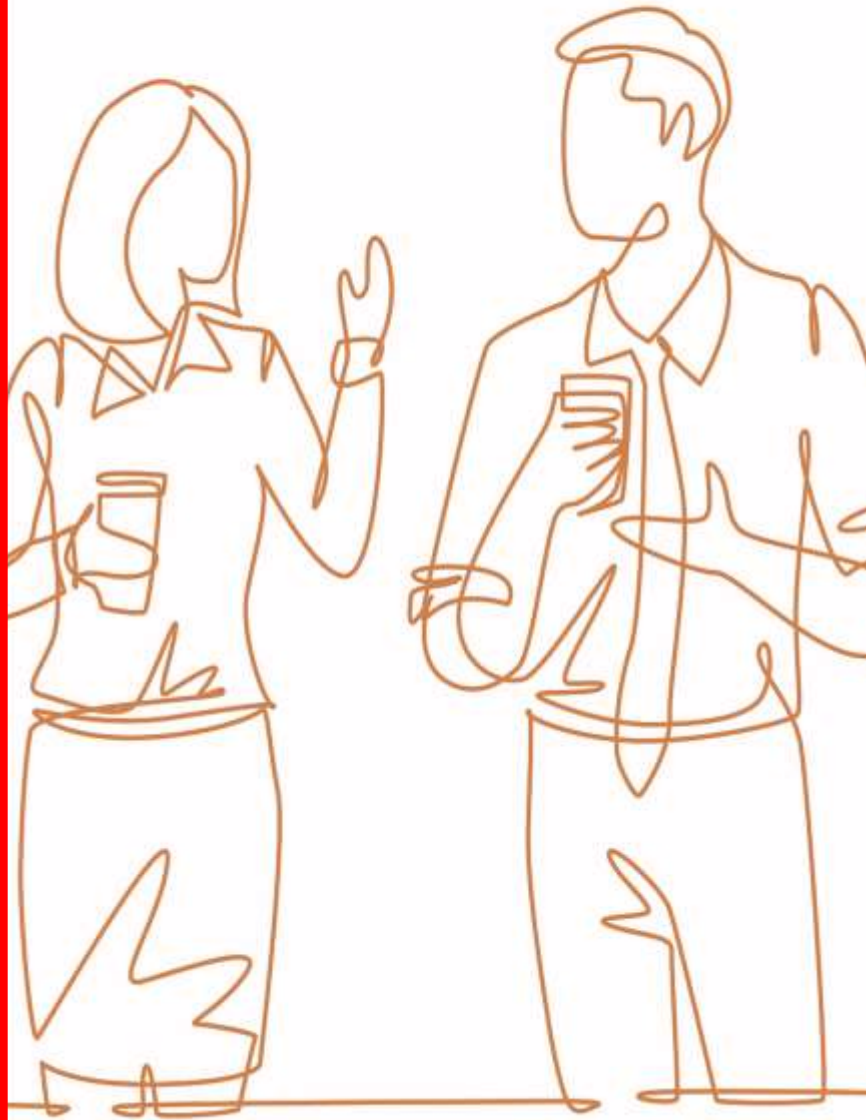
What are your favorites of these conversation openers? Why?

1. How's business? What's the story of your business? How did you get started?
2. "Are you a collector (art, stamps, coins, etc.)? What is the story? How did you get started?" "Do you invest in Real Estate? How did you get started?"
"Where do you vacation? Do you own a home there?"
3. How has the market been treating you? What is your investment philosophy? What's the best investment you ever made? Tell me that story.
4. "You've done so much for [charity]. What allows you to be so generous?"
"How were you able to make this wonderful gift?"
5. "I help donors give smarter." → "How do you do that?" → Story → "Have you ever been hit with capital gains taxes?" / "Have you ever thought about giving something other than cash?" → Ask about it
6. "I help people give weird assets to [charity]." → "What's the weirdest asset someone has given?" → Story → "Have you ever made any unusual investments?" → Ask about it

How might you start an asset conversation in your own words? Write it down. Next, we'll practice it with another person.

1. How's business? What's the story of your business? How did you get started?
2. "Are you a collector (art, stamps, coins, etc.)? What is the story? How did you get started?" "Do you invest in Real Estate? How did you get started?" "Where do you vacation? Do you own a home there?"
3. How has the market been treating you? What is your investment philosophy? What's the best investment you ever made? Tell me that story.
4. "You've done so much for [charity]. What allows you to be so generous?" "How were you able to make this wonderful gift?"
5. "I help donors give smarter." → "How do you do that?" → Story → "Have you ever been hit with capital gains taxes?" / "Have you ever thought about giving something other than cash?" → Ask about it
6. "I help people give weird assets to [charity]." → "What's the weirdest asset someone has given?" → Story → "Have you ever made any unusual investments?" → Ask about it

Starting an asset conversation

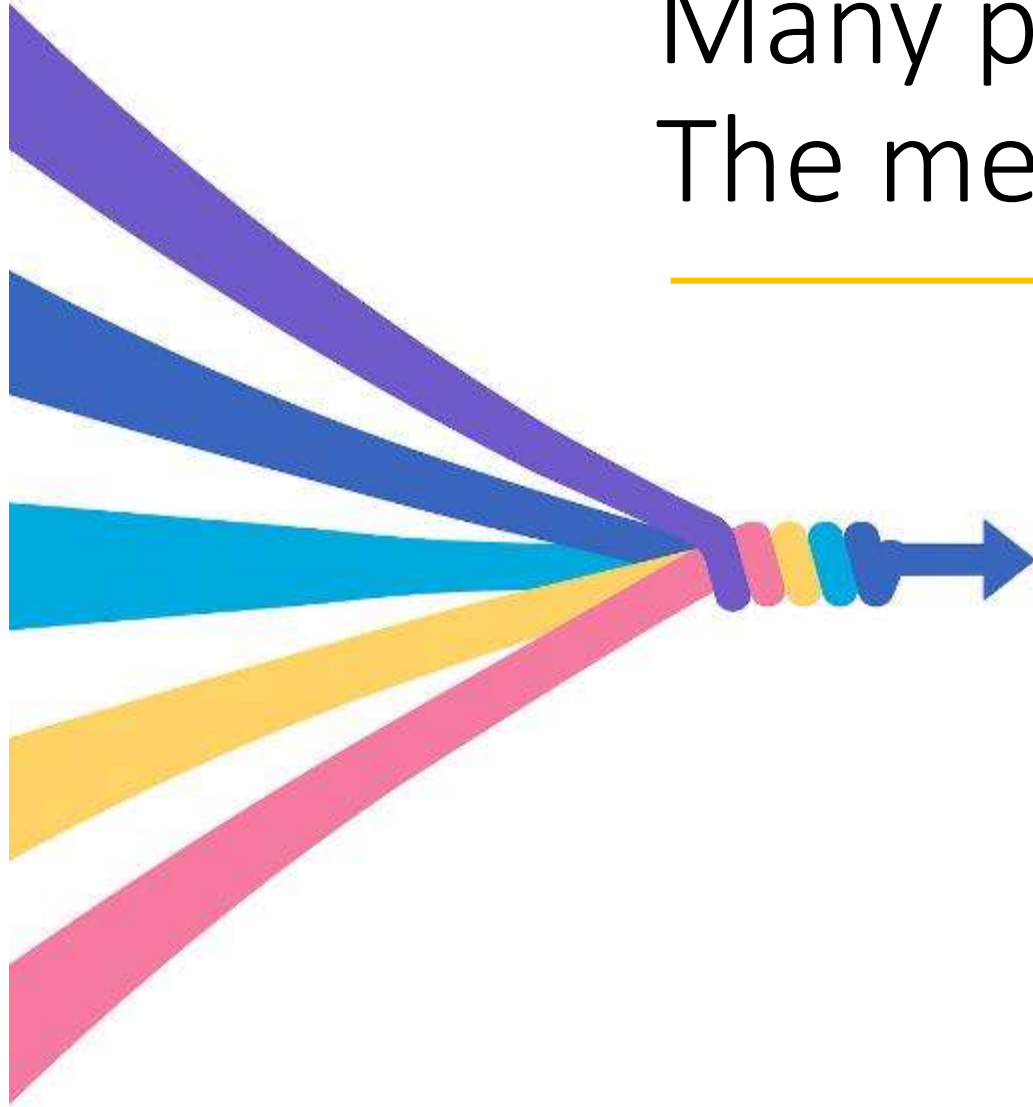


- Work with another person who will play the role of a wealth holder.
- Ask them your asset conversation opening question about your cause or organization.
- Listen to their answer.
- Ask at least one follow up question.
- As they are answering, try to think of a question that might move them through their past-present-future asset story.
- Afterwards, discuss the experience from both perspectives. Any ideas? alternatives?



They can also
signal that they
don't own any
appreciated assets

Many paths, one destination: The meeting to share options



“This reminds me of another donor’s situation. I remember he used some creative planning that [*avoided taxes/created income/provided for family*] and made a big impact at the charity. Would you mind if I talk to some of our experts and put together a few ideas for you to look at?”



But it's
uncomfortable!

These conversations require
talking about wealth

Think of the goal as social,
not financial

- It's what the other person
cares about
- Building and managing
wealth is a big part of
their lives

The right destination: Share valuable options at the NEXT meeting

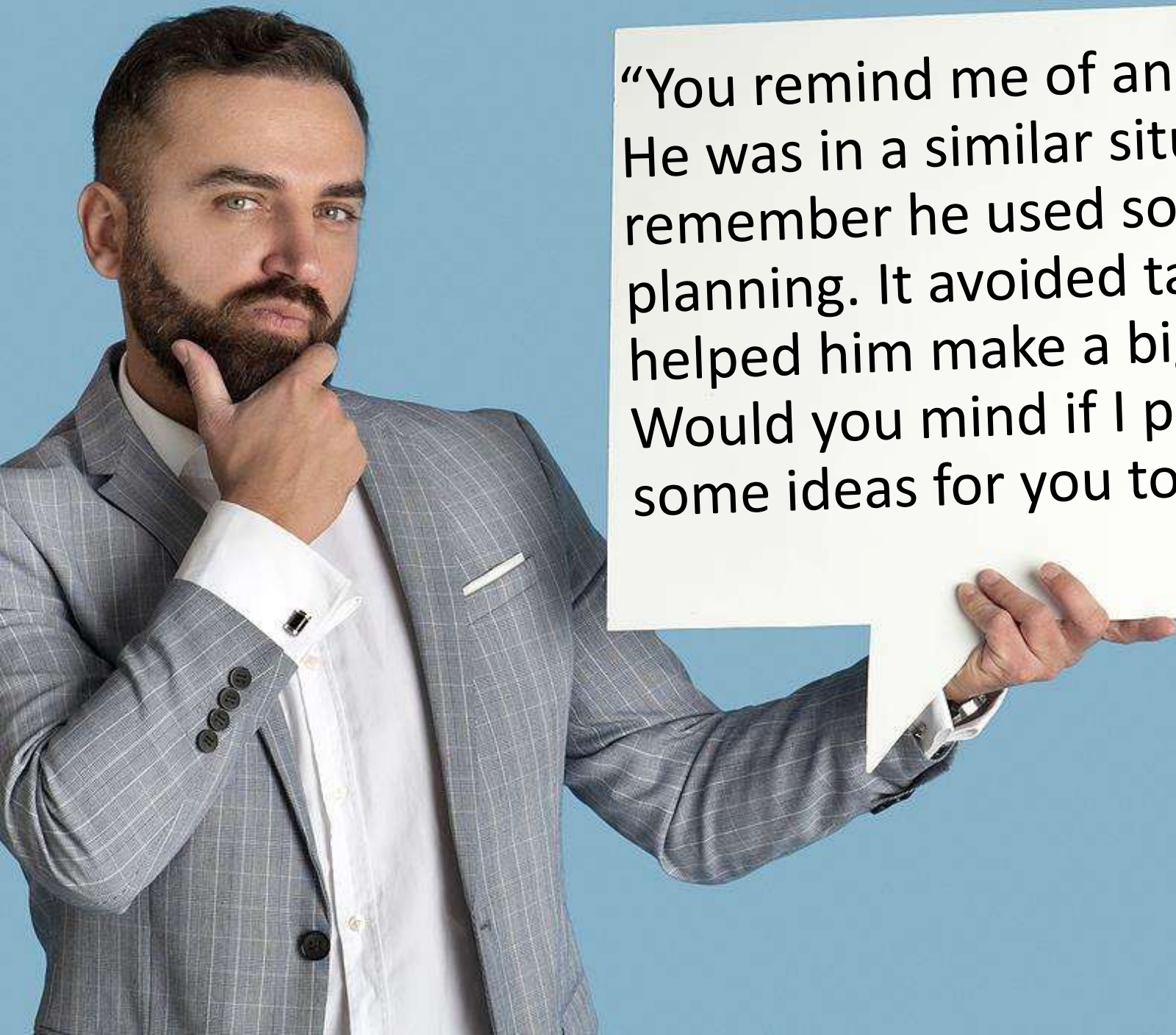
Fundraisers may fear
financial conversations

- These worries can come from having the wrong destination in mind

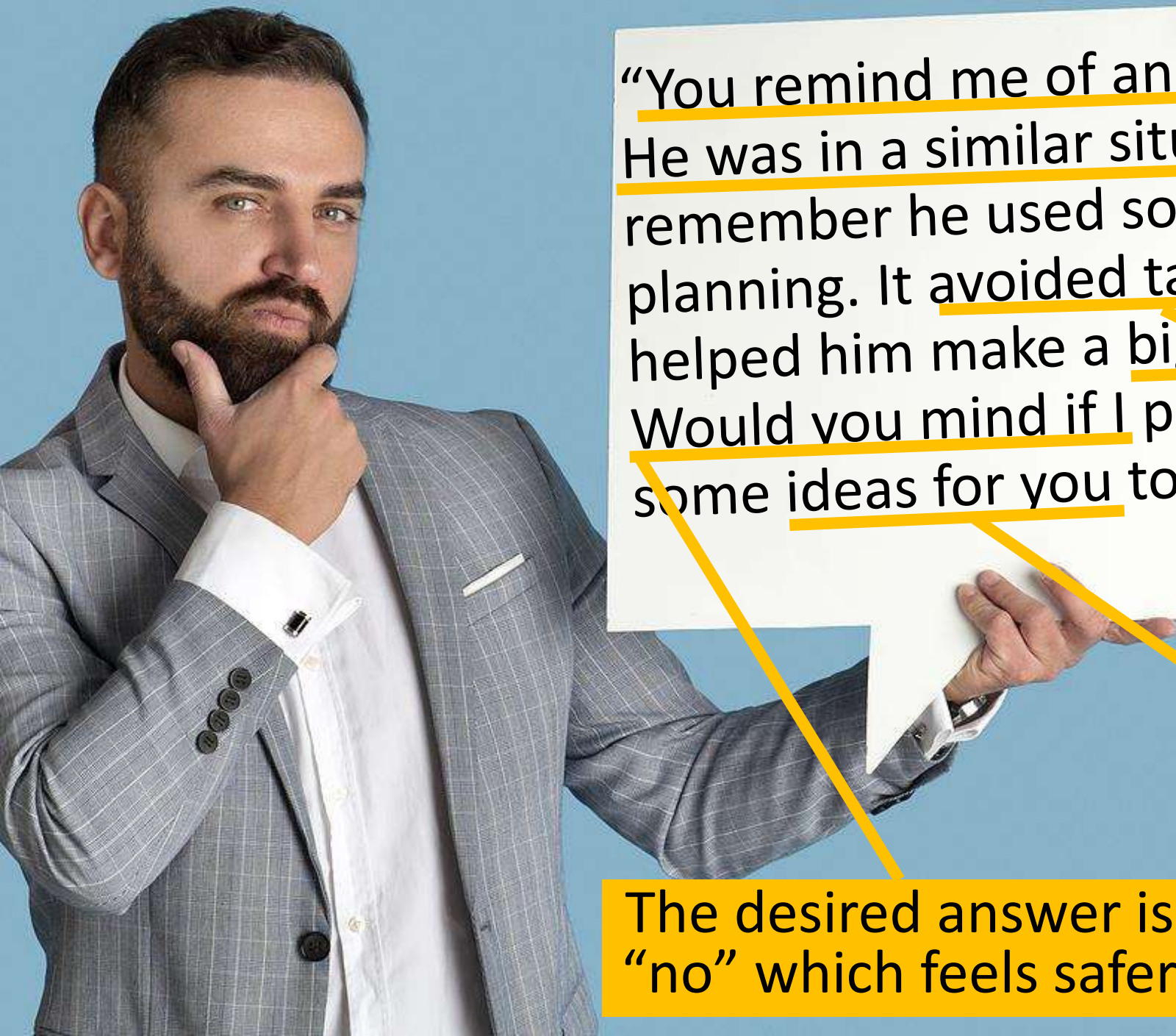
The goal is NOT to quickly
give the right answer

- The goal is to get permission to share valuable options at the next meeting





“You remind me of another donor. He was in a similar situation. I remember he used some creative planning. It avoided taxes and helped him make a big impact. Would you mind if I put together some ideas for you to look at?”



"You remind me of another donor.
He was in a similar situation. I
remember he used some creative
planning. It avoided taxes and
helped him make a big impact.
Would you mind if I put together
some ideas for you to look at?"

People like
the donor
have done
things like
this before

Leads
with
value

Asks for
permission
to share
more value

The desired answer is
"no" which feels safer

*Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to set their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things **to enjoy:***

- *to do good,*
- *to be rich in good works,*
- *to be generous and ready to share,*
- *storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future,*
- *so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.*

**~~Major gifts fundraising~~
The ministry of wealth
enjoyment:**

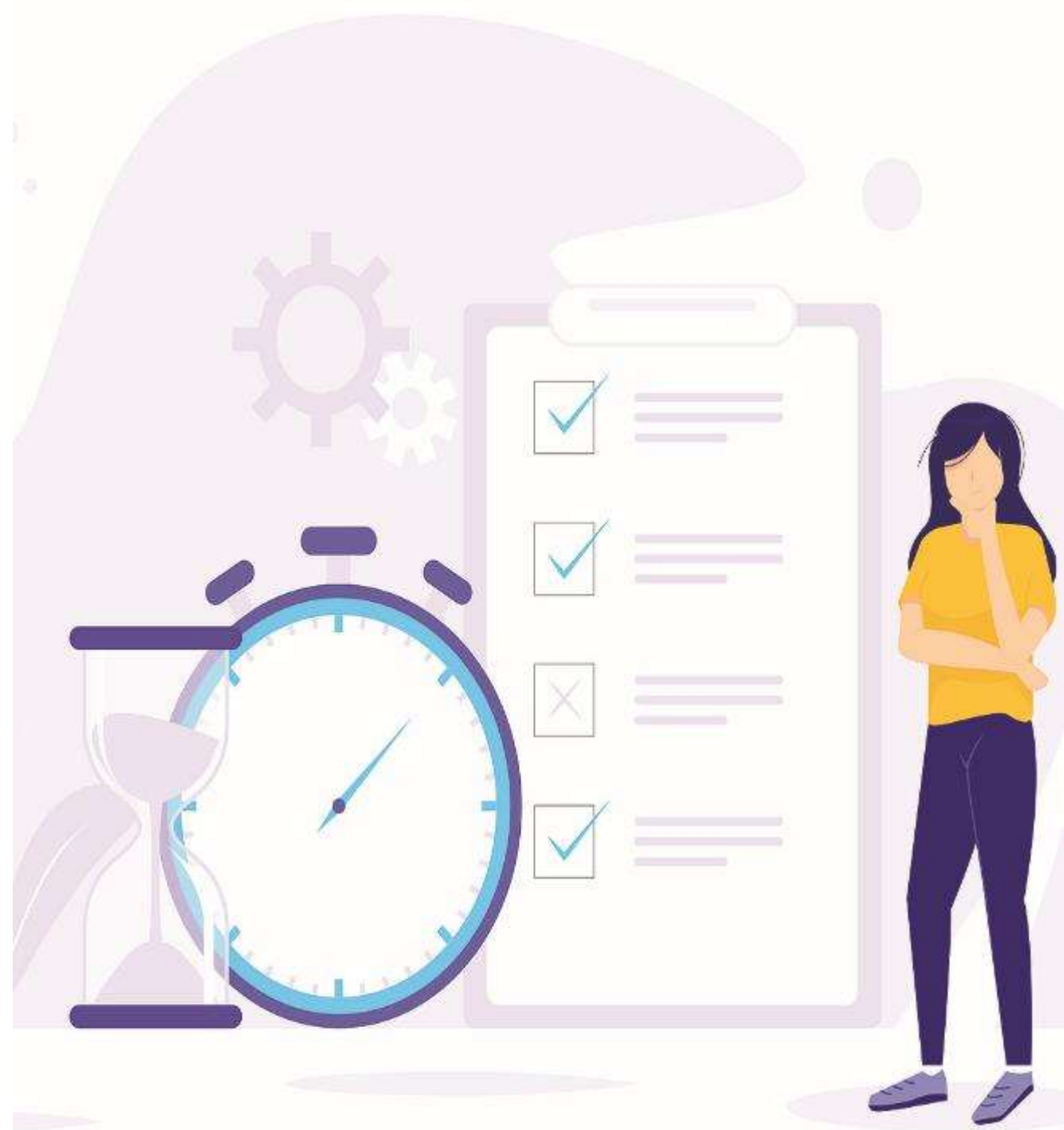
**We help rich people enjoy
their wealth!**

The power of delay

The right destination is to get the next meeting.

Creating this time delay:

- Keeps the initial conversation social - separating it from a financial ask
- Gives time to build creative options
- Makes those options feel more valuable
- Gives the donor time to think, moving the donor's mindset into the land of wealth sharing





An epic scene requires some build up

The guiding sage delivers the perfect weapon
to help the hero complete the journey

The partial reveal

- Expertise can help: It increases ability to spot issues
- But it can hurt if you instantly give the whole answer: Delay is valuable
- A “partial reveal” creates interest and attraction without giving away the whole story



Having the right
destination
changes things

It gives time to
consult experts
and build
solutions



"I want to talk with
some of my technical folks
first. That way you'll get all
the best options. But I know
there are some attractive
possibilities here."



Exercise 1: Asking for the meeting

Suppose you are talking with a donor. You ask how the business is going. The donor mentions he is looking to sell at some point. How might you respond in a way that could lead to the donor agreeing to meet in two weeks to review some charitable options?

Exercise 2: Face your fears!

The donor responds by saying, “I didn’t think that was an option because these are sub-S shares and if I donate them, it will violate the sub-S rules, because charities aren’t qualified to hold sub-S shares, and that would kick us into C-corp status which would trigger some massive tax problems!”

How might you respond in a way that could lead to the donor agreeing to meet in two weeks to review some charitable options?



Failing forward



- You think you see an opportunity, but later find there isn't a solution
- If you get the next meeting, you can still present other powerful options
- Even if the donor says "No," you've still shared useful options, providing value to the donor as a guiding sage

Setting is a place AND a time

Setting is a place – the land of wealth sharing

Setting is also a time – it may not be today

- An investment or business is about to be sold
- At the end of life
- A new project at the charity arises

Asking about gifts of assets lays the groundwork for future events





Use a gift menu in conversation

- “I help donors like you to give smarter. Usually this involves gifts of stocks, real estate, businesses, life insurance, or retirement accounts. The tax benefits can be much larger.”
- “What’s your favorite form of giving?”
- “Have you ever considered other types of gifts like [menu]?”
- “What options would you be interested in knowing more about?”

Use a menu in a survey, response card, or website

Check/click to receive info

- How to save taxes with gifts of stocks or bonds
- Top tax tips for gifts of real estate
- Tax smart giving from a retirement account
- Giving smarter with closely held businesses
- How to avoid estate taxes with charitable planning



Use a menu in your asset giving donor stories

Notice the variety of assets in the donor stories!

Oikiōn: A house; property, wealth, goods

Agrou: A field; the country, lands, property in land, a country estate

Hyparxeis: Possessions, goods, wealth, property

Ktēmata: A piece of landed property, a field, possessions

Chōriōn: A place, piece of land, field, property, estate

Perfume that “could have been sold for over three hundred denarii”

Asking opinions

1. Task justification

“We’ve noticed that other charities receive more of their gifts from stocks and real estate. We’re trying to figure out why.”

2. Request permission

“Do you mind if I ask a few questions about your thoughts on this?”

3. Ask for opinions



Asking opinions

1. Task justification

2. Request permission

3. Ask for opinions

“What’s the likelihood you would ever consider making:

A gift of stocks or bonds?

A gift of real estate?

A gift in a will?

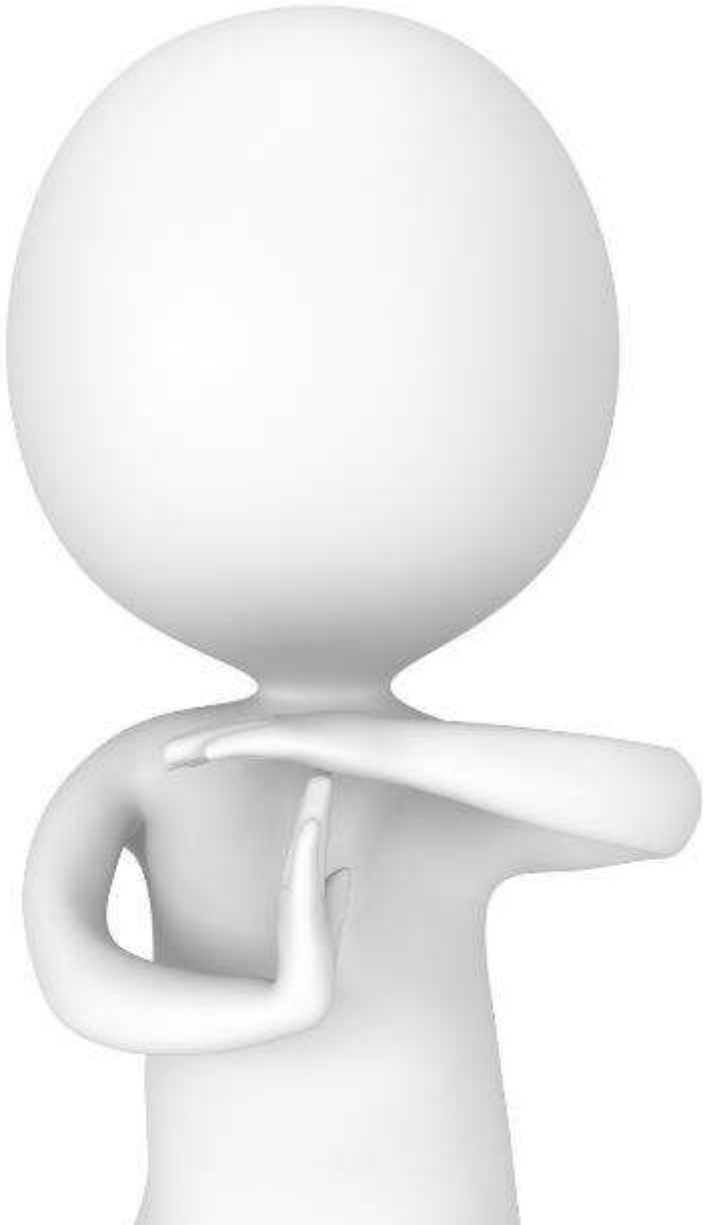
A gift of cryptocurrency, artwork, or oil rights?”

“What have you heard about the extra tax benefits from donating assets instead of cash? [or leaving estate gifts from an IRA or 401K]?”



Change the setting AFTER the gift decision

- “I had a donor on the phone. He said, ‘I’m going to send you a check for \$2,000.’ I said ‘Jim, is there any chance that you have stock that is worth \$2,000?’ He said, ‘Yes, absolutely. But I don’t want to sell that stock.’ I said, ‘Take the cash. Go buy that exact same stock. Then send us the old shares worth \$2,000. Now you have stepped up basis. That highly appreciated stock now starts at zero for capital gains tax purposes. And you get a charitable deduction as well.’ He asked, ‘I can do that?’ I said, ‘Yeah.’
- The next day we received a stock gift... of \$10,000 from the donor.”



Change the setting AFTER the estate gift decision

“If you plan to leave something to charity in your estate plan, could I share with you a way to make sure the best assets are used for the gift to minimize the loss in taxes?”



Change the setting AFTER the pledge decision

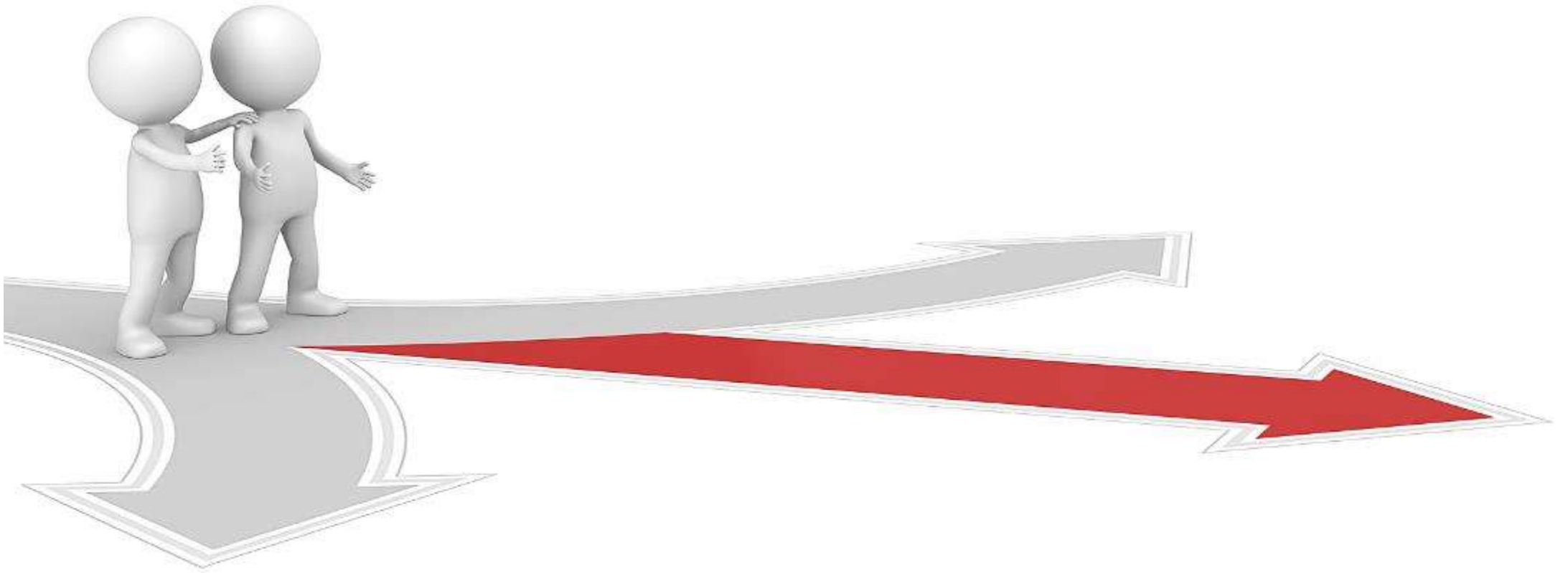
“I can’t thank you enough for this tremendous commitment to our charity. When I come back to finalize the details of how you want to allocate the gift, I'll bring a colleague who specializes in putting together gifts to maximize the tax benefits for you.”



Knowing v. doing

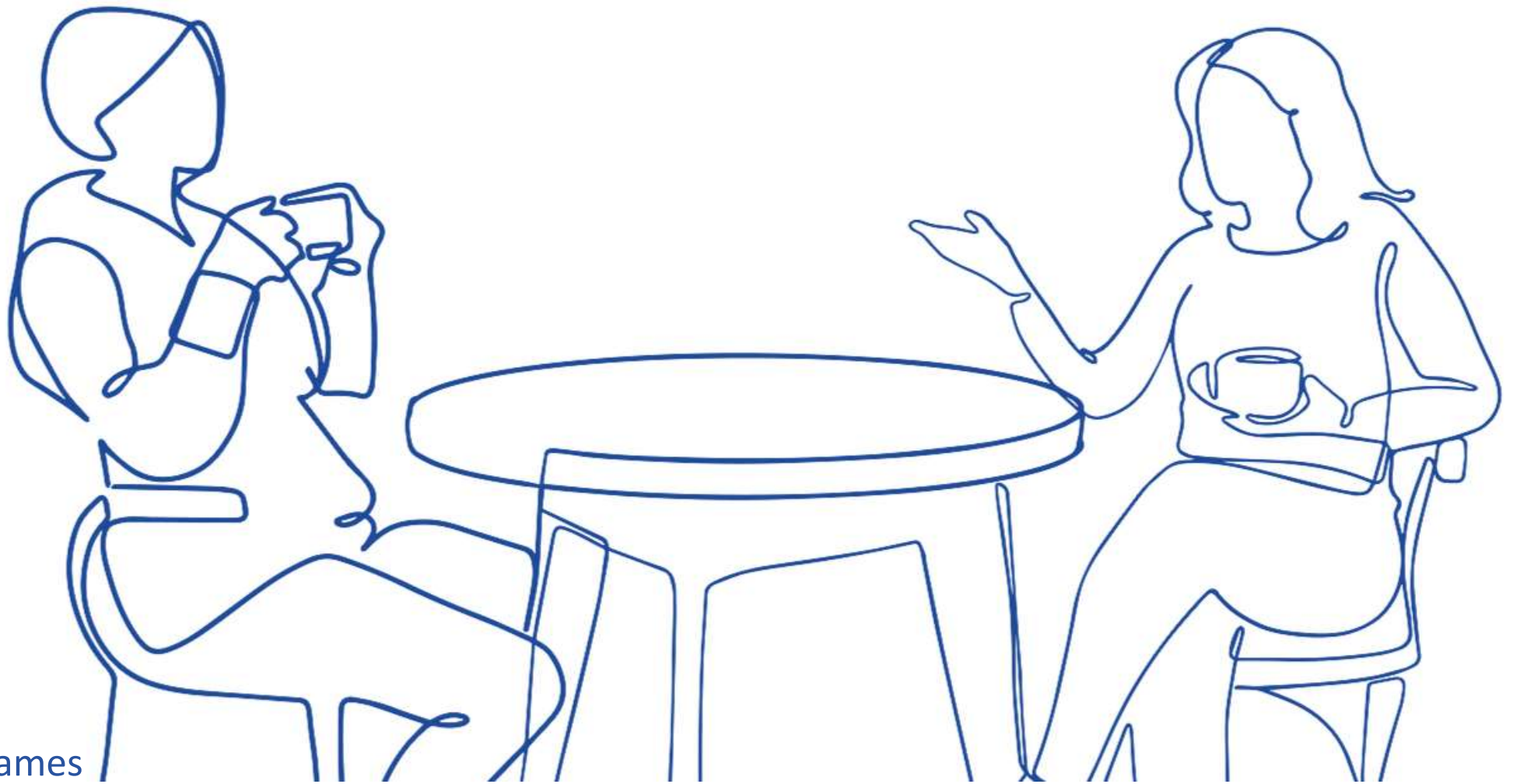
- The idea makes sense
- The execution can be daunting
- “You intervene in the process and actually stop and say, ‘*No I don’t want your cash.*’ I know that’s scary folks. I get it. But this is what you need to do.... What this really means is being the donor’s helper in this conversation.”





A different role

- You reject the cash – to help the donor
- You take on more administrative hassle – to help the donor
- You provide guidance, wisdom, and counsel as the donor's guiding sage



Professor Russell James

How to have wealth
conversations that inspire major
gifts of assets

Scripture,
science, and
sentences