

**Nonprofit 911 – June 23, 2009**  
**The Language of Change:**  
**20 Words and Phrases that Impact Attitudes, Actions and Funding**  
with Tom Suddes  
Sponsored by Network for Good

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**Rebecca Higman:** Now I'm happy to introduce our speaker. Tom Suddes founded the Suddes Group in 1983, after serving as director of development at the University of Notre Dame. In more than 25 years, the Suddes Group has raised over a billion dollars for organizations around the world. They've run more than 400 successful fundraising campaigns and transformed more than 5000 organizations through their funding bootcamps. Their clients range from small nonprofits to large colleges and universities, to start-ups to Ashoka Fellows.

So, without further ado, here is Tom Suddes.

**Tom Suddes:** Well, thank you very much, Rebecca. I love this opportunity to speak.

It's interesting that it's [Nonprofit] 911, which, of course, is the universal three numbers for "Help!" I'm imagining that most of the people on this call right now are looking for some kind of help, whether it's funding or otherwise. And my goal in next 45 minutes is to rock your world, literally. And I want to do that by trying to change your vocabulary, literally changing the way that you talk.

And some quick street cred, because who am I, and why would whatever I say matter? And Rebecca touched on a couple of things, but I've been banging around in this third sector of development and fundraising for 36 years. I like to think I started when I was 12, but that's not really true.

I was at Notre Dame. We did a \$130-million campaign. We reached 180, went 50 million over goal. I thought that was the greatest thing ever. That was in the early '70s. And now we're raising a billion and a half or two billion, so obviously, I wasn't that good.

We've turned the 400 campaigns, raised a billion. But, right now, we're also doing a lot of live training and coaching, as well as web-based training and coaching. And we've raised over a billion dollars, and right now, we're coaching organizations around another one billion dollars of campaigns. I've made 6000 one-on-one visits. I've screwed up 5824 times, just so you all know that to keep going.

And I'm involved with my partner, Nick, and some other senior partners here, and we're coaching some really, really big projects, as well as some really big dreams with smaller start-up funding. We've got a \$300-million campaign going, a 275, a \$25-million social-enterprise opportunity. And I wanted to link this. This entry point here is we're

preparing to begin our largest ever coaching opportunity with an organization, one organization that's looking at a billion-dollar vision.

Here's my point, though, is we're in the field every single day, in the field out doing the work ourselves with our clients. And what I'm going to share with you works. So, let's show why you need to change your vocabulary, change the way you talk, changes the way you think, and it changes the way you act.

So the title for this session is "20 Words and Phrases that Impact" - of course, I love that word - "Your Attitude." So, a lot of this is attitude and motivation. Now, it's not just semantic gymnastics. It's not just word changes that you're going to see. It's actually helping, hopefully, to impact your attitude, impact your action - I'll come back to that.

And ideally, and maybe most important for many of you on this line, is your funding. You need money, there's no question about that, or you probably wouldn't be on the phone. And to help you pay attention. When we present this program, this vocabulary training, live at our workshops, or any speaking or keynotes that we do, or training camps, almost every single participant says, "This changes everything. It changes everything."

One wonderful organization was here, left our bootcamp, had a board meeting three days later, and put all these words up on the wall, the old words and the new words. And Food Bank executive director was here for a 2-day training, a few weeks ago, and literally stopped us one hour into the two days - one hour in - and said, "This changes everything." And he went back and took a stagnant campaign that raised about four bucks in six months and raised \$500,000 in 30 days.

So, I'm hoping you'll pay attention as we move ahead. A lot of these are lessons I've learned over all these years, and they're word changes I hope can help you.

Before we go, though, I've got to set this up with you. We use the word "predispose" a lot. But, I've got to share with you our point of view, the three really really big insights that I consider to be important as we talk about these word changes. They, actually, are partially tied to the words as well.

If you have the handout, it just says "for-impact point of view." The first big insight is the idea of being a not-for-profit. I mean, think about that just a little bit. Is there any reason at all for you to call yourself a not-for-profit, to define yourself in the negative? I believe no. I believe the answer to that is no. You or your staff, your board, nobody wakes up in the morning and shouts, "Yeehaw! We don't get to make any money today!"

So, I want to help change your mindset here. You've got to stop defining yourself in the negative. You've got to stop begging for money. You're not a charity. People don't give to you because you're tax-exempt. It's all about an impact - your vision, your message. And that's where I'm hoping that you're able to go with this.

The second big insight - and we summarize these on a napkin for you. If you've ever been at any of our live trainings, we actually hand it out in napkins. So, this is our message on a napkin.

The next one took me 25 years. I'm not the brightest dude around. This was a huge epiphany for me. This was like St. Paul knocked off the horse kind of thing. Your impact drives your income, not the other way around. So, let me say that differently. The size and scope of your impact determines the size and scope of your income.

And with all due respect to everybody that's listening on this call, and I'm looking at the list, and we've got all the Americans on, the American Heart, American Red Cross, American Cancer, American whatever. We've got wonderful organizations; a lot of them. With all due respect and admiration to every one of you, not a single one of you listening to this has income that matches your impact.

Now, if you get this insight, the impact-income insight, the implications would be that it's not about money. It's not about fundraising. It's not about competition, other campaigns, all of that stuff. It's about your impact. Now, obviously, you need to be able to communicate your impact, clearly, concisely, compellingly. And I'm going to give you keywords that might help you do that.

The third big insight. I'll say it to you this way. You're in sales. Get over it. But, the big insight here is: just ask. If there's anything that I have been trying to do in the last 30 years of work, in trying to help, is to figure out a way that I can get everybody to just ask. I don't care whether that's web. I don't care whether that's in your material. I don't care whether that's in your memorable experiences, not special events but memorable experiences, or face-to-face, or any way that you do it. Just ask. You'll be amazed at what happens when you just ask.

So, let's get going with this. And I think the point of view should give you an idea of where I'm going.

So, language, lexicon, lingua franca, jargon. I love the little cartoon from "Doonesbury" that I stuck in there: "I just got my MBA, and I'm here to solve all your problems." And of course, then Doonesbury says, "Our products are junk. We're completely out of capital." And then the MBA says, "Have you tried jargon?" And I think that's a humorous way to get into this.

The list is in front of you. If you don't have it, I'll give you the word, and then I'll give you the old language, and then I'll give you the new one that I think you ought to be thinking about.

The first one, I've already done, is "not-for-profit." You should stop designating yourself as that. I think you should be a for-impact organization.

We do a lot of work with boards and with some corporations for sales training as well, and now I'm convinced that even the for-profit world is about impact, not about profit. Nobody sells their business by going out to people and saying, "Hey, you know why you

need to buy my product? So I can make money." That's the same bad as us going around and begging for money. So, you want to provide a solution, a service.

I spoke at Deloitte's Impact Day a couple of weeks ago, where all of their people, on one day, go out - 45,000 people out all around the country, helping out wonderful for-impact organizations. I spoke that day, and we talked about Deloitte being a for-impact organization. Not about profit, it's about their impact, their solution. So, you've got that one - new languages for impact.

The second one is "charity." You know word association - if I were to say to you, if you were all unmuted right now and I said "not-for-profit" or "charity," what comes to mind? When we do that in a live group, all of the negative things come to mind, the begging piece, the yucky parts of this business.

In lieu of charity, you know there's a fancy word for that I guess, when you think about it. I mean charity, in a lot of ways, has to do with love and the good word and help your neighbor. It's just a terrible word for what you do. So, I'm going to suggest any other word: cause; philanthropy, which is Greek for "friend of mankind" - anything besides charity.

Charles Handy, one of my favorite authors has a great quote. "Any cause that requires a lengthy explanation isn't a cause around which a crusade can be built." I want to encourage you to talk about your cause, and then your case, not about the fact that you're a charity.

This next one's a pretty big deal for me. Again, if you were unmuted at our live stuff, I'd ask all of you to recite your mission statement. We have Boys and Girls Club, Chicago Family and Guidance Center, CASAs, and Catholic Charities, and so many people on here. Gosh, I'm only in the Cs. But, your mission statement - nobody recognizes what that is. Nobody can literally - can't recite that mission statement. You just can't do it.

I'm amazed at how many people try and make that mission statement work when it's just a bunch of wordy, watered-down, all-inclusive, politically-correct gobbledygook, written with a thesaurus by a committee. Now, you can test this if you want. Ask any three staff or volunteers to recite, in unison, your mission statement, without looking. Then you can laugh and have a little fun at their expense.

The real goal here, instead of your mission statement, the goal is to be able to communicate your message. What's your message? Again, clear, concise, compelling, delivered consistently - any other C words you have. Your message should be able to be captured on a napkin. You know stay on message; don't worry about trying to change your mission statement right now. Leave it alone; it's too painful a process. Just work on your message.

We spent a lot of time with a lot of organizations trying to help them with their message. And for me, that is the ability to sit and listen to somebody go on and on and on with all the things that they do, and then try to help them summarize that message.

For many of you, it could be something as simple as kids and cancer, kids and the environment. It could be something as simple as saving lives, impacting lives, and rebuilding lives. I don't really care. I can't go deep here, but I'm going to encourage you to focus on your message and not worry too much about a whole bunch of other things.

Now, this works. I'm talking about this; a lot of you are into the whole branding thing. What's our brand? What's our logo look like? How do we get people to understand? You need a message, not a mission statement.

The next one, the fourth thing, is talking about "survival." Survival pitches work great for tsunamis and hurricanes. That's about it, and I'm not even sure they work well for that. I don't think this is about survival. I really don't think this is about survival. I think this is about transformation; it's about transformation.

Here's a great example of that. Thinking big is being able to actually talk about transformation, thinking big - talking about anything other than the fact that we need your money so we can make payroll, so we can fix the roof, because we have buckets upstairs on the fourth floor catching the water. That's a terrible presentation, terrible. So, I want you to rethink survival.

Let me do a little sidebar here, because many of you are extremely concerned about the economy. I've written about this. I have some stuff online at [forimpact.org](http://forimpact.org) on the third sector in the economy; you can download that. There's an audio with it. I'm not going to go into that whole piece, except to tell you that I've been through 10 recessions, if you count the one in 1949 which is when I was born. So, 10 recessions - we all come out of it. We're going to come out of this. Don't know how, don't worry about it.

But, if you're out pitching survival right now, you're not going to be able to communicate with the kind of people that you need to be talking about. So, it really isn't about the economy. And if you're worried about the economy, let me just remind you again that there are still people giving away a lot of money.

The chairman of the board of Habitat for Humanity a few weeks ago just made \$100 million commitment to Habitat. Somebody just gave the University of Chicago \$100 million for their business school. The guy who founded Blackstone, or one of those hedge funds, Philip Peterson, maybe - I can't think of it off the top of my head - just created a one billion dollar foundation so he can help the world. There are people out there who will help you do this.

Let me talk about sustainability for a second. I'm sorry - survival is about transformation. OK?

Sustainability, I'm bothered by the fact that you're out there as an organization trying to raise the largest endowment possible, so you don't have to do any fundraising. If we just had an endowment that covered all of our operating expenses, we wouldn't have to do that ugly, dirty fundraising thing anymore.

But, what if instead of trying to worry about sustainability, you actually started talking about solutions and solutions to problems? And start putting yourself out of business, if that's possible in the particular sector that you're in.

I know this doesn't work for everybody reading this, like education institutions who're listening to this - education institutions. But, I think if you're willing to go a radical leap here, you could even get to the point where you would say, "No more endowment." I'm not sure for-impact organizations should get caught up in an endowment arms race. We're communicating that we need endowment now to build and preserve endowment for future generations.

Endowment, in and of itself, is not the goal. Sustainability, in and of itself, is not the goal. Your best prospects want you to share your vision, think big and do that thing I talked about earlier - transformation. And they want to talk about the number of people you impact, the problems you impact and the way that your organization can scale and grow your impact. So, I want to get by those whole survival, sustainability words, if we can, and get on to some things that may help you.

"Inform," old language - inform. We inform your board, you inform your prospects and potential donors. You do that whether you're online or at an event or in person, and it's not the way to communicate if you're expecting any response. Nobody wants to be informed.

The big, new language word for me is all around - another I word - is all around involve and involvement. Involvement begets investment. Try that again. Involvement begets investment. Informing and information simply does that; it informs. It doesn't generate or engender any kind of real feelings about that. So, involving your board, involving prospective donors - until we change that word - involving your staff and stakeholders beats the living daylights out of sharing information.

So, on the board, very simple - drop "the." Drop the article "the." OK? You need your best people and you need those people "on board." All of you struggle with your boards. I know that; I've been doing this a long time. We're working with organizations across the country right now.

I just did a pretty big one-day board session down in Florida with one of the best cancer centers in the world. They have four boards, 84 people. We did a huge day with their boards, where we went through the message and everything else.

Now, I know boards are a challenge. But, when you think about boards, I want you to think about "on board," not "on the board." Boards themselves are a collective mob; they're useless. They're worthless.

The whole goal should be to get people on-board, aligned - so think about alignment, think about champions. Think about Jim Collins' wonderful bus analogy. You get the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and get the right people in the right seats. I think that not only applies to your organization, but it applies to your board.

I'm going to be very candid with you right now. At my age, I can do that; I can get away with this pretty bold and frank statement. All of you know that you have some wrong people on your board. You need to get those wrong people off the bus. You be nice to them; tell them they're wonderful. Tell them "thanks." Move them to emeritus; do whatever you need to do. And then go for some right people on the bus, and then get those right people in the right seat.

I'm not talking about committees. I'm talking about making sure that those people are helping you in areas that they're really good at. Get the people and finance and who are well-networked to help you with advancement and development. Get the strategy people to help you with strategy. So, stop; don't worry about "on the board." Get people on-board.

The next big word is competition. Almost every not-for-profit has a group of people who are convinced that they are in "competition." If we did this live, I'd be looking at you. And there'd be people out there going - I'd say, "Are you in competition with other not-for-profit organizations?" And some people would hesitate, because they know it's a trick question.

But, a lot of people would be nodding their heads up and down. Yes, we are. We're competing with the other nonprofits, with the United Way. We're even competing with our donors. We need them to give money. If they don't give, we lose. OK? If they do give, we win and they lose. Well, that's ridiculous. It's either win-win, or lose-lose.

So, the big word in the for-impact world is collaboration. And again, I'm not talking some fancy \$10 word that is a business-y word. I'm talking about collaboration versus competition. You need to look around and see how you can be collaborating. There are 6000 organizations with cancer in their name - 6000. There are probably a kazillion organizations. Where I am in Columbus, Ohio, in central Ohio, there are a kazillion organizations that help kids.

There is half a kazillion organizations who want to do education.

Well, from a prospective donor-giver, I would love to see some of you collaborating more and do the things you do really well. Now, it's happening in the real world. You'll see McDonald's and Disney and Pixar working together. You'll see all kinds of companies working together, collaborating - just something to think about.

Big word change - I haven't done this one before. I did this just for Network for Good; it's something to talk about, to get your attention. Overhead, administrative costs, fundraising costs. Some of you big organizations that are on this line are really, really hung up on how much it costs for fundraising. Our cost is 17 cents of the dollar. They are 26 cents. They're whatever. And you think that's a big deal.

It's not. Nobody cares. That's a secret based on more than 6000 visits and working with thousands of organizations. Your best prospects don't care about overhead and admin costs and fundraising costs. If they bring that up with you, it's a cop out.

What do they care about? They care about your impact. I did a lot of work with a large, national health organization, which you can figure out as I talk. But, I've done work with a lot of them. Nick and I have been in front of just about every large healthcare organization in the country, doing keynotes and speaking and training.

But, one of them had a really, really high percentage number that was spent on staff, and they positioned it as that. It was an admin cost, a staff cost, a fundraising cost, and they were actually kind of embarrassed and bothered by it.

But, if you're talking to a sophisticated philanthropist or even anybody with a brain, they understand that for you to deliver your service, for you to deliver your impact, you need people. I'm fine if your people costs, your staffing costs, are 100 percent. You just need to re-spin that, gang. You need a different way of talking about that.

I'm going to encourage you - this is a very simple offset to that. Instead of talking about it in your words, in your language and off of your budgets, talk about it, about your priorities. All of your money goes to priorities. Your budget is used in certain areas.

One way that it goes is people, programs and places -people, programs and places. That's where your money goes. Almost everybody on this call can end up with those three buckets. Every single day, we help organizations figure out how to package that up in a way that will help people fund it. Stop talking about your fundraising costs, and start talking about your impact, your priorities and where the money's going to go. It's going to people, programs and places.

The YMCA - I did that international YMCA NATO thing a year and a half ago. Their three buckets really work well around people, programs and places. In fact, I think according to this, the YW or the YM of Toronto is on, and their people came away going, "Wow, that's an easy, easy way to talk about what we do." So again, stop talking about your fundraising costs.

Here's just a word I'm throwing out at you; it's annual funds. It's a jargon word. For me, it represents so many things in our industry that I just absolutely - I should say dislike, but I'm going to say hate. I hate these jargon words. I hate annual fund. I hate moves management. I hate special events. I hate all of our silo words.

I do a lot of work with colleges, and I'm always fighting this battle with schools who are trying to brand their annual fund. We need to make our constituency, our alumni, and our donors understand that we need help with our annual fund, understand that we need unrestricted dollars - which I'll come to in a minute. What a crock. Newsflash, people don't give to your annual fund. They don't give to your silos, like direct mail or your annual appeal or your Christmas appeal or your Thanksgiving appeal.

And don't even get me started on your special events. Your special events - first of all, they're not special and they're not events. They rarely generate any income or money anywhere close to your time and effort. And if you think anybody in your organization really wants to start working for Events Are Us, do one more golf outing or star bazaar, or bingo, you're crazy. Talk to your stakeholders and see what they want to do.

By the way, the opposite word there is memorable experience, which you can find it from us online. But, the annual fund is a catchall word for all the jargon that we talk about. I would like to encourage you, urge you - what we're doing all the time is to package everything up around specific priorities and opportunities. I'd like you to think about membership-leadership programs, opportunity funds, specific priorities, instead of talking about your annual fund.

A couple of quick examples. We're doing an opportunity fund in lieu of an annual fund for a wonderful, cutting-edge business college. We have a president's innovation network, which is a \$10,000 annual investment. We have a leadership society around their founding year, 1906.

I've done a lot of work with Colorado College - their wonderful president, Dick Celeste, a former governor of Ohio, Rhodes Scholar, and ambassador to India, and my good friend Steve Elder, their VP. We put together a president's circle at Colorado College that's taken them from nine or ten people, three years ago, giving \$10,000 "unrestricted," to 178 members in the president's circle - same 10,000. Dick Celeste tells people what he uses that President's Circle, that Opportunity Fund for.

We just did the same thing at Ohio Wesleyan here in Delaware, Ohio, with their president, Rock Jones. And we're up to 42 members there, and he's using that to help with some financial aid projects for students who would be unable to attend because of the economy.

So, just some things to think about there, instead of trying to position yourselves around our words, if you could.

Let's talk about feasibility studies. It just makes me gag that we use that as one of the things that is a big deal for us. "We need a feasibility study." Talk about a jargon word. I've watched hundreds, maybe thousands, of nonprofits do feasibility studies and I still don't get it. I still don't get it.

Internal staff gets together, agrees on more money. Internal group decides to do a campaign to raise more money. Internal leaders enlist external consultants to do a feasibility study. Totally for CYA backup justification.

Think about feasibility. No sharing of vision, no engagement, no dialogue, no involvement, and no presentation of an opportunity. You're sending out some consultant who sits with a prospect and says, "If XYZ nonprofit were to do a hypothetical campaign with a hypothetical goal, how much hypothetical money would you hypothetically give to this hypothetical campaign?" Wow. Sign me up.

I really, really believe that the opposite of a feasibility study is what we call a leadership consensus-building process. And I think it's very important for you all to be able to think about that, and getting stakeholders involved. Instead of going out and asking people if they'd give money to a hypothetical campaign, get them involved. Get them engaged as leaders to help you with message clarification and prioritization and a funding plan.

Get consensus around the right decisions, around messaging and priorities. And then have them help build the thing, not just take everything out and jam it down their throats. Leadership consensus building instead of feasibility.

Capital building campaigns. Again, jargon, something that I just can't stand. Focusing - YMCAs do this a lot, so I apologize. I know there're a number of those listening. But, focusing exclusively on brick and mortar and capital improvements, or buildings, is perfectly fine. If you're in the real estate business! You're not. Nobody cares about your space or about your building. They want to know how your investment is going to help you care and deliver. Care for those you serve and deliver your service.

So, it's not about a building campaign it's about the big picture. It's about funding your vision. It's not about the space or the building or the complex, it's about what goes on and how those bricks and walls and campus will be used to make an impact.

Everybody who is on this or listening to this at any point in the future, I would love for you to stop right now your building campaign. Stop it right now. Stop going out and talking - I know it's recognition and they get to put their name on it. I've heard everything, gang.

I've worked with so many YMCAs and I can give you the names of 5-10 big YMCA executive directors and board people who have listened to this part of the message and said, "Wow! That's exactly what we're doing. We're running a building campaign and we can't figure out why people don't want to give to our building campaign."

Why do people want to give to give to the YMCA? They want to give because the YMCA is all about strong kids, strong families, and a strong community. They're about mind/body/spirit. They're not about buildings.

Now, the three buckets for the YMCA are around people, programs, and place. So, it's fine to talk about your camps, if you're the Y. it's great to talk about the new spaces that you need to deliver your service, but not to do a building campaign. So, I'm going to encourage you to change that thinking as well.

Strategic plans - I put this in our top 20 words because it seems like it's such a big issue with so many people in this industry. Nick and I are working with three really big efforts. When we first started with them, their line - these are big campaigns, gang; there are very big; multi-hundred-million-dollar campaigns.

All three of them began our conversation by saying, "When we get our strategic plan done," Tom or Nick or Kevin, Tim. "When we get our strategic plan done, then we can start to talk about the funding and development.

And our answer was, "No! That's stupid. Your strategic plan is worthless." Your five-year strategic plan is gobbledygook; it sits on a shelf; nobody reads it. It's all of the bad things that go on in that. I don't really want to get off on this, but again, it's just a different way of looking at things.

I would encourage you to drop strategic plans and start talking about thousand-day plans. Thousand-day plans. What are you going to do in the next thousand days? Think about that for a second. Not a five-year plan. What are you going to do in the next thousand days to be able to make this work?

I know I'm admitted contrarian freak on business plans and strategic plans. It's because I really believe they're a work of fiction. They're prepared by left-brain accountant types. They're indecipherable, unimaginative, unread binders, like I said that get stuck on the shelf.

I would love for you to get really, really, really into your vision, your mission, your meaning, your message and put an action plan together that gives you focus and direction. And then put together a thousand-day journey. That's 11 quarters, 33 months, almost three years. And match the thousand-day action plan with a thousand-day funding plan.

Don't wait for your strategic plan to get done. There are people out there right now who want to help you. You know what you need; go do it.

I talked a little bit about the whole restricted/unrestricted. I'm running out of time; I don't want to go too deep here. But, I do want you to listen to this as carefully as you can, please. Again, based on so much actual field experience - it's not about restricted or unrestricted. It's about the gift and about what it does.

Everywhere we work, strategic coach or other, we talk about specific goals and specific priorities and specific projects for everything. Leadership societies, legacy societies, specific requests.

In 99.9% of the time, this ends up being budget relief. If somebody wants to "restrict" their giving - which basically means they're going to give you a lot more money because they want to invest in a part of what you do that they really like - they're going to give you more money if they can "restrict" it to one area of their interest.

As long as that area of interest is something that you're doing, and you're doing it well, and you're spending money on it, then let them do it! More scholarship money. If you're a school, the more money people give you for scholarship, it's budget relief. It replaces money that you're already giving out!

So, I want you to just don't ever bring that up, at least around me, that you're having problems with restricted/unrestricted. The only time that's a problem - here's a Notre Dame example. When somebody wants to "restrict" their gift to build a new football stadium - which happened in 1970, '75, '80, et cetera, when our library was 114 out of 115. You can't take that gift. You get it.

Let's jump. Development officers. I'm hung up on this. I've got seven or eight minutes left before we're going to open it up. I want to make sure that you get this point here. This is about titles. I'm really challenging you on your titles.

You need to change your wording there: planned giving officers, major gift officers, minor gift officers, principal gift officers, corporations, foundations - blah. I mean I don't have a magic answer here, but you need to change everything. I'm the chief visionary officer at For Impact in the Suddes Group. So, what I do is what I love to do and what I want to do.

For one of our coaching clients, just last week, we gave somebody the title of supreme commander to the person really and truly runs the operation. One simple way to deal with all this development officer stuff, though, is to make everybody a relationship manager, or a relationship officer so that they're responsible for relationships. Now, the only problem with most organizations is, you actually have to have a relationship before you can manage it.

Don't get hung up on here, but let me challenge you as I get off of this one. Your titles are important. When people look at your card, when you're calling to get a visit, when you're signing your letters, when you're on the web and people are looking at who they're getting communication from, think about the words that are underneath your name. See if they actually reflect what you want them to reflect. OK, just something to think about.

Now, we're going into the fast and furious, the final five. These final five should rock your world and change everything that you're thinking about right now. I hope you haven't left this call, and I hope I haven't bored you. I hope you're still with me, because donor/donations - word association.

Quickly, [finger snap] come on, say it out loud or to yourself in somebody's in the room. What is a donor? Yeah, blood, organs. The only group listening to this, and actually the only "nonprofit" group or even for-impact group - because they really are - that can use the donor word is the American Red Cross, or whoever else is working with organs or blood.

The new word here is investor and investments. Again, it's not semantic gymnastics, gang. It's very, very important that you understand that this is about an investor and an investment. What is every investor want from their investment? Come on, this is interactive, even though I can't hear you. What does every investor want from their investment? That's right, a return.

Number 17 is warm fuzzies. The new language, the new word, the new way to look at this is an actual return on investment. Do they get a return, when people make an investment in your organization? They sure do. If you're the American Red Cross, and you're doing training and service and disaster relief - which by the way is only 10 or 20 percent of what ARC does. But, when you look at your impact, then people want to make an investment, and they want a return.

The number 18 word is "cultivation." I'm a fake farmer; I have 50 acres here. I have animals and acres of planting. I have a little farm thing for the grand-kids. In farming, the word cultivation is just another word for spreading manure on crops. So, I want you to think about cultivation as spreading manure on your best prospects. I hope you're laughing and not getting upset with me, but I don't really care.

Because I'm going to tell you what, none of your best prospects want to be cultivated. They don't want you to come and visit with them 50 times before you ask them. They don't want you sending 100 direct mail pieces before you finally get out to them what you want them to do. They don't want you bombarding them with web stuff to "cultivate," spreading more manure before you finally communicate your message and how they can help you.

Stop cultivating and start maximizing the relationship, right now. We got \$10,000 yesterday on a 30-minute visit for Junior Achievement in Columbus, Ohio, from somebody who had never been involved with JA ever and didn't even know what they did. One of our guys walked away with a \$10,000 commitment for three years, \$30,000 - no gift history.

Now, in most organizations, that would have been the first of seven moves management, which I guess I won't go into that - but, not into cultivation, not into moves management. Maximize the relationship at this given moment.

The last two words - "Appointment." We need an appointment. Word association again - yes, doctor - worse, dentist. This is about visits, people. If you're out doing major gifts, and many of you are on this listening, because the Network for Good is such a wonderful fantastic thing that they do around the web and everything else. But, there's a lot of different ways to do this.

At some point, you need to do some face-to-face; you need to be visiting with people. A visit implies friendship on the same side of the table, working together. An appointment implies ugh.

And finally number 20, "ask for money." Ask for money. Don't ask for money. My whole thing for you is to stop asking people for money. I am all about presenting an opportunity. The best thing you can do is present people with an opportunity to help. Money is just worthless wampum.

Nobody likes asking their friends for money, much less strangers. Your board hates asking their friends for money. And the rare volunteer - they should be treasured as a true gift, and they should be psychoanalyzed and then cloned, if they like asking people for money.

So, let's look at these last things. You wonder why you can't go out as a development officer, major gift officer, fundraisers. You wonder why you can't get an appointment with a donor that you've been trying to cultivate in order to ask them for money. Duh. I hope these words have helped you in some way, and these changes change the way you're looking at doing this.

Here's a Just Ask strategy as a way to summarize everything. And then I'm going to open this up, Rebecca, so we can get a couple of your questions that came in. But, this is online, too, on our ForImpact.org site on 12 June, last week. It's a simple Just Ask strategy, but it summarizes these last words - kind of a neat way to look at it.

Get a visit, not an appointment - Think doctor, dentist. With a qualified prospect and potential investor, not a donor - think blood and organs. To do discovery, not talk, talk, talk - think blah, blah, blah. Share the story, not more information. Think glazed eyes. Present the opportunity, not ask for money - think beggar. Do it shoulder-to-shoulder, not face-to-face, eyeball-to-eyeball, because that's competition, confrontation. And fund the vision, not help to survive.

So, based on all of that, Rebecca, I hope that that helped a little bit. I really appreciate all the stuff that Network for Good has done. I'll do another little mini-close after we're done with the questions, if I could, because, I want to refer them to our ForImpact.org NFG site.

**Rebecca:** Absolutely. Thank you so much, Tom. I'm sure you gave all of our listeners a lot to think about. I was seriously taking notes as you were talking, also.

**Tom:** That's good.

**Rebecca:** We'll dive right in and take a couple of the questions. For the folks who have not sent their questions in, the email address, again, is Fundraising123@NetworkForGood.org. So, excellent.

We're going to start with a question from Sunya, and Sunya has a little bit of a back story. She says, "Our grassroots nonprofit was founded in '93, but this is the first time we really are working on a fundraising campaign. We're a social justice-based, mental health organization using the arts as a means of treatment. Our mission includes empowering the lives of girls, women, and families and addressing the oppression that so often informs their lives."

"We don't have the visible track record of the larger agencies, but I'm proud of our programs and services that assist women. There is a lot of strength and grit to our organization's survival. We are actively developing strategic partnerships and a variety of collaborative relationships. How do we tell our story? What language should we use" - I think she's going for - "when we approach investors, without making it sound like we're poor and pitiful?"

**Tom:** Yeah. Well - I'm sorry, what was her name again, Sonya?

**Rebecca:** Sunya.

**Tom:** Sunya, you're the only one left. Listen carefully. I don't know how you can - Rebecca, repeat the last two words, the last line. How can we do it without sounding what, pitiful?

**Rebecca:** Poor and pitiful...

**Tom:** Yeah, poor and pitiful? What happened to the whole first part about empowerment and girls, a proven program, and social justice through the arts? And the pride that comes through in the first part of your comment - I mean if you believe you're poor and pitiful, then that's going to come across.

If you believe in what you do, which it sounded like you did up until that line, then you need to go out. Social justice through the arts, empowerment of women - obviously more girls - you have got a great message. You have a great message. You need to get out, right now. Stop talking about grassroots. Stop talking about survival, and talk about how you can scale and grow your program.

Sunya, how many people do you impact right now? The answer to that is X. How many people would you like, how many young women would you like to be able to impact this year? How many in three years? How much does it cost for you to be able to do that? That's what you're going out - that's your message.

And you know what? Let me give you two great thought on prospects. Go meet with women entrepreneurs. Go meet with women who have huge capacity. Sunya, don't call on anybody who's not a woman. If you're going to go out and start your effort, right now, go start it with women. Don't talk to men. Men don't even have a heart; men are worthless. Women rule. Go talk to women.

You know women are going to end up with \$100 trillion in the next 20 to 30 years, Sunya? Because that's the transfer of wealth; all of us guys are going to die first. So, women are going to end up with \$100 trillion. Go find them; go talk to women. Tell them what you do. They've probably even had that experience. We do that all the time with groups; we do a lot of work with domestic violence centers and a lot of work with programs that are geared towards young women. Be proud about what you've done.

Even though you're young and a start-up, you have to be proud. I don't care if you've only helped 20 women. You want to help 100 this year, how much does that cost? Divide it by 100 and then go get people to underwrite every single one of those young women that you want to empower.

Got another one there, Rebecca?

**Rebecca:** "Do you have any suggestions for making the case for integrating this new language and these new terms into our collateral, our web copy, in order to... How can we sell this to our board or other leadership who might be hesitant to move away from our mission statement?"

**Tom:** Yeah, I think that's great. It's such a multi-faceted question. Let me give you three really quick answers to that. Number one is your board. Every single person on your board, if they're a business leader, or they're in business, or they just have brain, or they're wonderful volunteers that love what you do, they're going to get it. You know none of these word changes are that dramatic, except to you. They're not dramatic to your board.

We've done this thousands of times. When you go in and talk to your board about being a good business organization, about being able to kind of do things in a more professional, businesslike way, I know that catches a lot of heat. But, it's OK.

You know some of this is good stuff. But, listen, when you go in and tell people that you don't want to cultivate our donors anymore, we want to maximize relationships. We don't

want to ask people for money; we want to present opportunities. So, the way to integrate this, I think, is just start using the new words yourself.

You know they say when you want to learn a new language that immersion is the best way. Like if you want to learn Italian, go to Italy. So, if you want immersion, you can certainly come here for two days. That's a plug; you can come and get some of our training. But, that's not that big a deal. Immersion to me means start using these words. Penalize everybody a nickel or dollar or whatever you want to do around the office when they use the "donor" word. You know start thinking and talking and acting in these ways that we've suggested as alternatives to this.

And then start putting it up; start getting it out to all of your people. Start talking about an investment in the organization. Start talking about presenting people an opportunity to help.

Sunya should be presenting women entrepreneurs and widows - women whose husbands have passed away, whose children are doing fine, who love what she does and are into the arts and into social justice. And then Sunya should say all - I mean 12 of these words I just went through, Sunya could use, Rebecca, with one of these investors.

So, I wouldn't worry about your board. And again, I'm sorry for being so darn frank. Again, it's an age thing. But, these word changes, the only problem in them is your problem. You're all having a problem with them. Nobody outside your organization is going to have any problem with any of these. So, just do it. Hey, that's a great phrase; I wonder if - oh, Nike's already got it. I think they've already got that one. But, they don't have "Just ask," yet. So, I have two words instead of three.

**Rebecca:** This is just a quick question from Theresa, who would just like a recap. She said, "What was the new language for overhead, admin, fundraising costs?" I think it was number nine on your list.

**Tom:** Yeah. For me, the change there is around priorities. And remember I used the term there around packaging up your priorities around people, programs and places. I rambled a bit there, Rebecca. So, I'm going to give the 30-second clarification.

Stop talking with anybody, either online, or in your material or in person about your overhead, about your administrative costs, about much money you spend to raise money. Don't ever talk about that again. Talk about your impact. And then, you have to spend money to have an impact. So, I want you talking about your people costs. I want you talking about your program. How much does it cost to run these wonderful programs that you're doing for these young women or young children or senior citizens?

It's not really an opposite; it's just a new language. Drop all the concepts of overhead, admin, fundraising, and start talking about the things that you do in a positive way, in order to deliver your service. I hope that helps a little bit there, Theresa, because I don't think I did a good job at that earlier.

Before we finish up, I'd like to give the URL for For Impact: [ForImpact.org](http://ForImpact.org). It should be on all of your stuff. Everything up there - there is so much, so many things there. We've put up thousands of pages of stuff. We've brain-dumped as much as we can. It's all free; you can go there and get good stuff. I encourage you to go there and check it out.

My partner, Nick, has done a special offer for the Network for Good, for your network. It's a free pass to our open coaching network. So that's free, if you come in through the [ForImpact.org/NFG](http://ForImpact.org/NFG). So, this is a new solution that we've got that mixes motivation and how-to and examples. There's a funding roadmap and there's training videos. There is a resource library. I mean there are so many cool things up there, train your team on "the ask."

You can learn to identify prospects. I wrote a prospect thing, 86-page prospect identification thing, to help you. So, anyway, that's all available. Plus, you can download my "Take a Quantum Leap," my nontraditional campaign book. If you're in a campaign, I would suggest you go there right now and get that free download for the Network for Good people. There are also examples up there, presentation tools, vision cards, messages and everything else.

I just want to close with one great line, though. Peter Drucker is one of my favorite thinkers, a brilliant thinker and management guru. He used to say, "Don't tell me how good this stuff is. Tell me what you're going to do with it on Monday."

So, I'm hoping that there are enough people on this who've heard this and will hear it in the future: Change the way you talk; change the way you think. But, most importantly, I'd love for this to be a session that helped you change the way that you act.