

# How to Be Persistent as a Fundraiser When Donors Say “No”

Learn about how to respond to donors when they say "no," and how a fundraiser must be dependent on God - not on themselves or donors.

## The 100 Ways the British Say "No"

Rob: Persistence, people saying no, no, and how you need to be persistent.

I once read a article in a British newspaper about how many ways the British have of saying no.

I was really taken with it, because when you work as a philanthropist, and you're the gatekeeper for someone else that's gonna make the decision, you're figuring out how to say no, quite a bit of the time.

Because in philanthropy, like [First Fruit](#), you're basically saying, "We're open for business. We're here to give money."

And so you get a lot of requests, and pressure, and other things like that.

So you get stuck with saying no. And I was just really taken. This guy had a hundred ways that the British say, "No."

My favorite was, "The queen wishes me to convey."

I thought, wow, there it is. That's the ultimate. It's not on me. The queen looked this over, and she's just not going for it, and that's the ultimate, and you can't, you can't deal.



## Donors Have Multiple Ways of Saying "No"

But, you know, donors, givers, have multiple ways of saying no. They can say no, that "I'm just not convinced."

They may not say that word, because they feel it's a little harsh. They just may be difficult.

There's a lot of discernment, and pastoring that goes on in a real fundraising situation to understand what the "no" is.

It could be, "No, not right now. We've tapped out our resources."

One of the things, again, we're doing this during the COVID-19 crisis, this is a very anecdotal survey on my part.

But, what I'm understanding from the American Evangelical Foundation community that is institutional givers, is that they're not at this point, entertaining new donors, new proposals.

Hopefully that's just for a period of time, as they want to focus on their existing, the organizations that they exist with, and make sure that they can help those organizations carry across what may, or may not be a difficult fundraising time for them.

And so this is a very challenging time. So getting a no right now from an American evangelical philanthropy might be, you know, "Try me again next year. I'd be very interested in your work, but I just, we're focusing on who we already know right now."

So getting a first gift could be a little more difficult in the American setting.

And then there's the no that says, you know, "Don't ever come back here. May there be a curse on your children's children to the third generation, if I ever hear from you again."

I have encountered that in my own fundraising in past years. So, you just never know, where the doors are gonna open.



## Depend on God, Not in Your Expertise in Fundraising

We didn't get into on this, but we will, this faith in excellence idea, and this is where it really comes into play.

I struggled with this idea of understanding faith in excellence, and how to position them together so that you're not saying you're dependent on your expertise in fundraising, or dependent on your donors, but your dependency is on God.

And, as I [mentioned in the book](#), I was talking to my friend Henry Cloud, and I said, "I'm puzzled over how to do this."

He says, "Oh, this is easy." He said, "Just fly to where the worms are. Fly to where the bugs are."

And what he was referring to was that scripture that says God provides for the birds of the air.

But, if you observe birds, and springtime is a great time to observe birds, although I'm not a birdwatcher, where I live we have a variety of, birds all the way from eagles to little robins.

And, they've got to work hard all day long for their food. Yet, the food's there.

It swims in the water, it runs on the ground, it's underground as worms, and that is the excellence part.

But the faith part is knowing that it's there, and that God has provided it.

Because if he has called you to a project, if he has called you to a work, if he is encouraging you to think about your own setting, even though in your setting, there is no philanthropic tradition.

There is very little wealth of any kind, very few Christians.

We will be exploring through these times how people have gotten started, not just survived, but thrived in the very circumstances that you're describing.