



PHILANTHROPY
UNIVERSITY



FUNDRAISING: CONNECTING WITH DONORS

Course Readings



Module 1



MODULE 1
Asking Questions



3 MINS



ASKING QUESTIONS

Questions that begin with “what” or “how” are crucial to get to know your acquaintance. “Why” questions are certainly important but can sometimes be limiting.

I like to learn what someone has done and how they have accomplished things. You’ll want to customize these questions (especially where you see “[x]” which indicates the topic or field that is relevant to your organization or the person to whom you are speaking). But as an example, you might ask questions like:

- *How did you make the decision to get involved in the field of [x]?*
- *What are the most important things you think we should be thinking about as we move toward developing our fundraising program?*
- *How did you develop your career in [x]? What did you do to improve your skills?*
- *What do you think would be the best solution to address the [problem your organization is trying to solve]?*

“When” and “where” questions are also helpful. I would try to start with “what” / “how” / “when” / “where” questions and then introduce your “why” questions.

Here are some additional questions you might ask¹:

Rapport building – Asking questions to get to know the person, put them at ease

- What are you most passionate about? Why?
- If you could change the world, what would you do?
- What actions do you think would best cause the change you envision?
- What changes do you believe would make the world a better place?
- What would you like to pass on to future generations?

¹ Sources:

- Association of Fundraising Professionals (<http://www.afpnet.org/ResourceCenter/ArticleDetail.cfm?ItemNumber=20186>)
- Bloomerang (<https://bloomerang.co/blog/23-questions-to-ask-donors-and-prospects/>)

ASKING QUESTIONS

Learning/investigating – Asking questions to better understand the person's professional interests/needs

- When did you first become interested in [x]?
- Where do you think [x] is an especially pressing issue?
- Why does this cause matter to you? Why now in particular?
- What do you believe would most transform [this particular situation]?
- Which other organizations effectively address this cause?
- Why did you decide to get involved in supporting [x] programs?
- Why did you have such a strong passion for [x]?

Asking - Asking for support

- Why did you choose [x] as the focus of most of your giving?