



# **The Accidental Fundraiser**

My parents  
adopted me in  
Germany and  
brought me to the  
United States.





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Fundraiser since 1987

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Worked for UNCF – 11 years

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Georgia Tech – 25 years

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Founded AADO in 1998

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AFP Global Board Chair – 2023  
& 2024

## Fundraising Trends

Online  
Fundraising

Peer-to-Peer  
Fundraising

Crowdfunding

Data-Driven  
Fundraising

Impact  
Investing

Monthly  
Giving  
Programs

Corporate  
Social  
Responsibility

Donor-Advised  
Funds

Storytelling  
and Visual  
Content

Regulation and  
Transparency

Hybrid Events

Major Gifts  
and Legacy  
Giving

Social Media

Artificial  
Intelligence

Partnerships  
and  
Collaboration





# "Stumbling into fundraising"

An informal expression that describes a situation where an individual becomes unintentionally involved in fundraising activities.







**Accidental Fundraiser:** **An individual who ends up raising funds for a cause or project without intending to do so.** It often occurs when someone recognizes a need or opportunity for financial support and takes on the role of fundraising, even though fundraising was not their primary purpose or goal.

**Intentional Fundraiser:** **An individual who deliberately chooses a career in fundraising.** They tend to acquire skills and knowledge in philanthropy, fundraising, and nonprofit management through a combination of formal education, on-the-job experience, and professional development opportunities.

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## Real quotes from emails and phone calls:

- *“I stumbled into fundraising. I don’t know if this is what I am really supposed to be doing.”*
- *“I have imposter syndrome – I’m just faking it ‘til I make it.”*
- *“What if I am exposed and people discover I don’t really have a clue!”*
- *“These goals and expectations are exhausting!”*
- *“The whole metrics thing takes all the joy out of raising money!”*

JUNE 8, 2020 PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE BLOG

# While It Matters

By Birgit Smith Burton

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... I was one of 15 students selected from more than eight hundred applicants to participate in the coveted musical theater program at the State University of New York at Fredonia. After my white adviser told me to choose a different career path, not because I lacked talent, but because I was black and it would be difficult for me to have a successful career, I left the program at the end of my freshman year.

A photograph of a piece of brown, textured cardboard. A jagged, irregular hole has been torn through the center. To the left of the hole, a small, cylindrical piece of the cardboard has been rolled up, resembling a paper tube. The text "What's your story?" is printed in a bold, black, sans-serif font across the white background visible through the hole. The entire scene is framed by a white border, which is itself set against a light gray background.

**What's your story?**

**WHAT inspired  
you to choose  
fundraising as a  
profession?**



# WHO inspired you to choose fundraising as a profession?







**Charles R.  
Stephens**


How do you know If  
You've Entered The  
Right Career Path






# You've quieted the noise.

You've taken steps to  
eliminate distractions and  
focus on what is important to  
you.

A stylized sun graphic on the left side of the slide. It features a large, solid yellow circle representing the sun's disk, with several short, thick yellow lines radiating from it to represent sunbeams. The background is a solid orange color, and a large white semi-circle is positioned on the right side, partially overlapping the orange background.

# You're doing what excites you the most.

**Evaluate your overall job satisfaction. Are you generally happy and fulfilled in your current role, or do you often feel stressed, unhappy, or unfulfilled?**

The background features several abstract geometric shapes: a green triangle pointing right, a blue circle, a yellow dashed vertical line, an orange semi-circle, a blue circle, a yellow dashed horizontal line, a green square, a yellow dashed horizontal line, and a large orange circle.


# You don't settle for mediocrity.

**Assess whether you're continuously learning and growing in your role. Are you developing new skills and gaining valuable experience?**



# You don't work for your schedule it works for you.


**Examine your work-life balance. Is your  
career allowing you to maintain a healthy  
balance between work and personal life?**

A large yellow triangle is positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, pointing towards the top right.

You are motivated by a sense of duty, empathy, and a desire to make a difference.

**You're committed to service.**

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A red ceramic cup is partially visible on the left side of the image. To its right, a white paper napkin is laid out on a wooden surface. The napkin features a blue, serif-style quote that reads: "Make a living doing what you love".

“Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.”

— Confucius



# Fundraisers ~~wanted~~ NEEDED!!

- **High Demand for Fundraisers:** As nonprofits compete for donor support, they require more fundraising staff to meet their financial goals.
- **High Turnover:** High turnover rates, burnout, and job dissatisfaction have been common issues in the field.
- **Competition from Other Sectors:** Fundraising professionals often have transferable skills that make them attractive to other and easily lured away by higher salaries and benefits.
- **Training and Development:** The need for nonprofits to provide more financial support for fundraising staff to participate in formal training and educational programs dedicated to fundraising.
- **Perception of the Profession:** Fundraising is sometimes viewed as a stepping-stone to other nonprofit roles rather than a long-term career choice.
- **Lack of Diversity:** Efforts to promote diversity and inclusion have been made, but more work is needed to ensure representation from different backgrounds and perspectives.
- **Economic Conditions:** Economic downturns or recessions may result in reduced giving and subsequently limit the need for fundraisers.
- **Remote Work and Pandemic Impact:** The COVID-19 pandemic prompted changes in work environments which impacted the ways fundraisers operate and connect with donors.





- The fundraising landscape is rapidly changing, and development professionals are facing many new challenges. These demands necessitate more sophisticated, comprehensive, and intentional tactics –
- Resulting in a need to balance the art and science of fundraising.

- Some understand fundraising is a complex process that involves both **artistic** and **scientific** elements.
- Some argue that fundraising is more of an art while others believe that it is more of a science.
- Some believe fundraising is an **evidence-based** practice - you question something, test that something, and observe the outcome.
- Some believe that fundraising relies more on traditional “gut-feel” approaches to fundraising

What do you think?

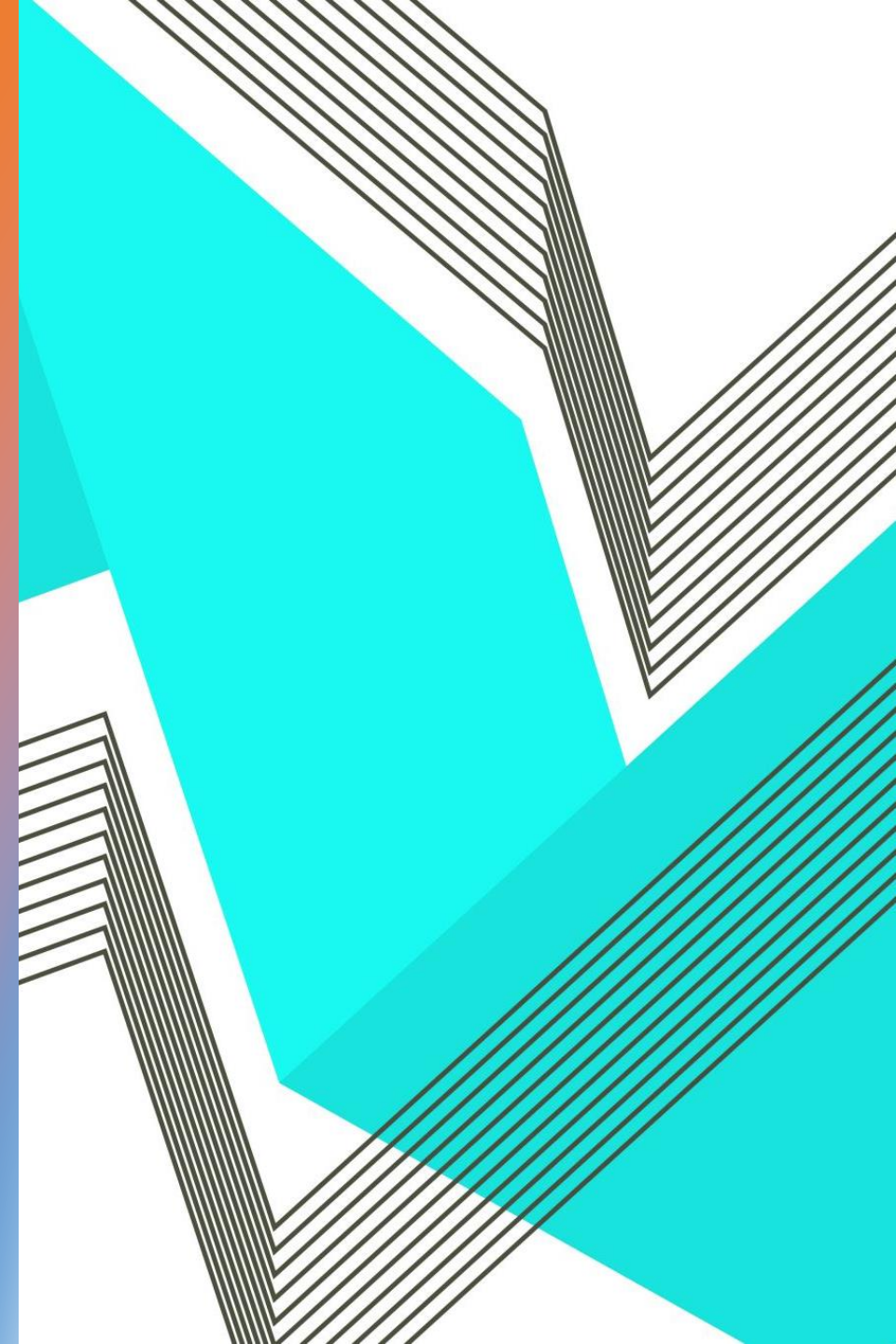


The ART of fundraising is knowing how to engage donors through great story telling and relationships.

These are the primary currency of fundraising.

The SCIENCE of fundraising is the ability to gather and analyze data to know who to engage and how they should be engaged.





Understanding donors is important to building long-term relationships and increasing their giving. To understand your donors, you need to think of yourself as a donor. **How do YOU want to be treated?**

Pay attention and take time to really understand their giving patterns and preferences.

Tell Stories that overlap with their stories and **show how your work aligns with their values and goals.**



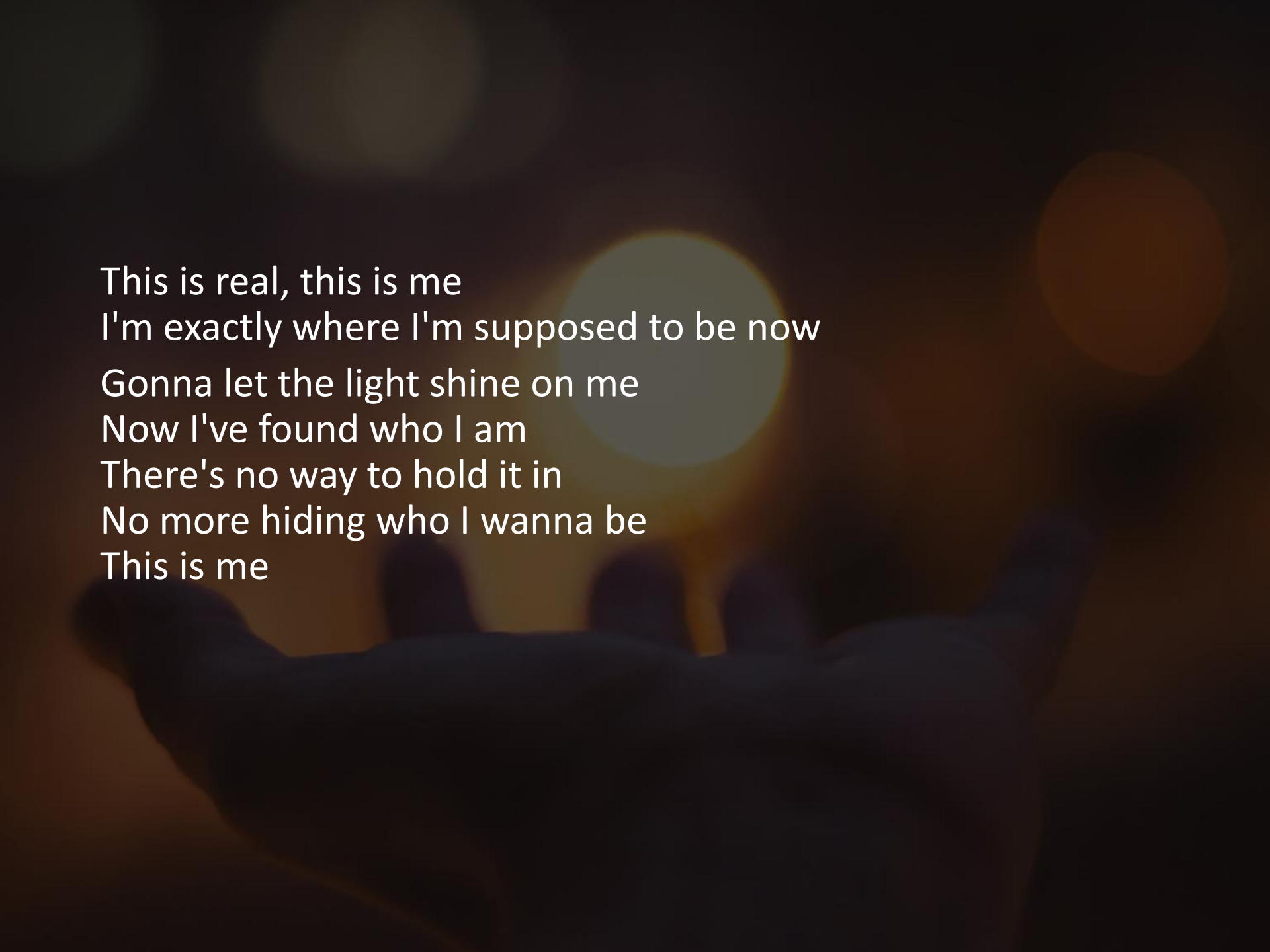
Thank you for  
paying for our  
gas for a day!







*"I'm so sorry that your dream was cut short  
... and yet, by the looks of things...it seems  
like you're right where you need to be...AND  
you've smashed the barrier that has held  
women of color back from leading the  
board!"*



This is real, this is me  
I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be now  
Gonna let the light shine on me  
Now I've found who I am  
There's no way to hold it in  
No more hiding who I wanna be  
This is me



*“Success*  
is liking yourself,  
liking what you do,  
and liking how  
you do it.”  
– Maya Angelou

