

# RELATIONSHIP FUNDRAISING

A DONOR-BASED APPROACH TO THE BUSINESS OF RAISING MONEY

THIRD EDITION: THE 32<sup>ND</sup> ANNIVERSARY EDITION

KEN BURNETT



# Why another edition?

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An introduction by Jim Hilborn, publisher of *Relationship Fundraising*, Third Edition



It's 32+ years since the First Edition of Ken Burnett's *Relationship Fundraising*, in April 1992 and 22+ years since the 2002 Second Edition, published by Wileys. How the world has changed since then! One comment from readers, however, has been repeated consistently and echoes down the ages. It says, in essence, that the fundamental tenets of relationship fundraising haven't changed. Experienced and even relatively novice fundraisers have made this point, over and over again. It's the principal reason underpinning this Third Edition, which we are proud to publish, reproducing Ken's original text and including 160 pages of additional material from his writing over recent years, to bring the book that you now hold in your hands up-to-date.

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Though in constant demand from its first appearance this book had become scarily expensive – nudging £50.00 in UK money and over US\$70.00. We believe it's worth that, but we've worked hard to keep costs down, so no one has any excuse for not owning their own copy. So, even though this third edition is extensively revised and expanded with new material by 50 per cent, we've managed to beat a decade of inflation and still reduce the price. It'll also soon be published as an e-book and (as soon as we can convince Ken to do the reading) in audiobook format too.

Since that first 1992 edition the widely-known and respected author, Scotsman Ken Burnett, has published several other insightful books on fundraising and storytelling:

- *Friends for Life: Relationship Fundraising in Practice*
- *The Zen of Fundraising*
- *Storytelling can Change the World*
- *The essence of Campaigning Fundraising*
- *Tiny Essentials of an Effective Volunteer Board.*

Ken's also written and published around 100 articles and produced more than 40 short videos, in addition to curating and co-editing the entire output of the two-year effort to repair and enhance UK fundraising's damaged reputation, via The Commission on the Donor Experience (CDE). Co-founded by Ken Burnett with his long-time friend and colleague Giles Pegram CBE, this initiative produced a treasure trove of additional content on donor relationship development, all created and distilled by an army of volunteer fundraisers determined to restore public confidence in fundraising (see Appendix 1, page 391 and Appendix 14, page 523). The CDE's entire output can be found on [www.SOFIL.org](http://www.SOFIL.org), *The Showcase of Fundraising Innovation and Inspiration*, a free resource for fundraisers everywhere that Ken co-founded in 2007 with his late wife Marie.

Exclusively for this edition, in addition to including the entire text of the second edition of *Relationship Fundraising* with only limited essential changes, particularly in the sections covering legacies, Ken has selected and edited 15 special features distilling the most important lessons and insights he's learned over the intervening decades. These are assembled in the appendices, which start on page 385. In these pages Ken takes the opportunity to look back, from the vantage point of hindsight, at the approaches first described in this seminal book. This gives him a unique opportunity to freshen his perspectives on relationship fundraising and make this book even more relevant for fundraisers into the 2030s and beyond.

Ken is always happy to hear from fundraisers and to help where he can with any questions or observations that his work has provoked. He can be contacted via email at [ken@kenburnett.com](mailto:ken@kenburnett.com).

*Jim Lewis introduced him, brandishing at his audience a copy of Relationship Fundraising's first edition, bristling with post-it notes.*

### **A much-quoted text**

In the mid 1990s Ken Burnett was invited by the American Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) to address their annual conference in California. Jim Lewis introduced him, and as he did so he brandished at his audience a copy of *Relationship Fundraising's* first edition, bristling with post-it notes. This was the PBS fundraising office's copy. The story inspired Roy Williams' brilliant cover design — we hope you like it. Ken says, "I think that's when it first dawned on me that this book was a

success.” Since then, among numerous and consistent accolades, literally hundreds of people have commented on its readability and quotability. Here are just a few of the most frequently quoted lines from the book’s first and second editions. As you read the call-out quotes in this edition you’ll find lots more:

*“Fundraisers will commit a fatal, suicidal error if they embrace commercial practices too enthusiastically.”*

*“Few professions offer such variety as fundraising... if you think selling a product is difficult, try getting someone to give you money for nothing.”*

*“It seems to me to be ridiculous for any charity to have large investments in property or in stocks and shares if it hasn’t invested in the development of its donor list.”*

*“I wouldn’t give any money to a charity that didn’t spend a sizeable part of its income on administration. Because if it didn’t, how could I have any faith that my donation wouldn’t be wasted, if the proper administrative machinery wasn’t in place?”*

*“Do not forget that techniques and skills themselves are limited. What you must do is to stand up and encourage and develop a vision of a new society.”*

*“Every fundraiser has a responsibility to the donor, to satisfy himself or herself that the organisation’s programmes are sound and to report back to the donor that they are.”*

*“You don’t sell to your friends.”*

*“You should aim to make your donors friends for life.”*

*“Don’t start a letter with ‘Dear Friend’. What kind of friend can’t be bothered to use my real name?”*

*“It will help if fundraisers combine to create a positive image of older people and to banish myths that equate old age with inactivity, poor health and decline.”*

*In 2022 Ken posted a rare item on Facebook, to celebrate his best-known book's translation from the original English into the Polish language, as the single text chosen for a special printing by the Polish Fundraiser's Association. "Not bad," he observed, "for a book that's been around more than 30 years."*

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*"People constantly refuse to conform to the labels that we put on them, with almost total disregard for the fact that our lives would be much easier if they did."*

*"Donors have a right to be involved in your charity, just as shareholders have a right to be involved in the companies they partly own."*

*"I suspect there are tens of thousands like my mum – people who for natural reasons have paused in their giving. People fundraisers think of as lapsed donors and bombard with appeals...Surely we fundraisers could be more distinctive, sincere and original – and so more welcomed – when we write?"*

*"Fundraising is more than a job. In the right hands, it is a powerful force for change and while that change is under way it's an inspirational beacon of hope."*

This is a very partial list – even a superficial read of these pages will quickly reveal lots more. So as Jim Lewis did all those years ago, it may be wise to invest in some post-it notes. Please, if you find something worth repeating in this edition, do let me as publisher, or Ken the author, know.

Anyone bold enough to offer his or her work up for public criticism online must endure the inevitable hostility of social media users, and Ken Burnett is no exception. Most writers fear anonymous reviews, though critical comments on *Relationship Fundraising* and Ken's other books have generally been benign, even effusive and for the most part, consistently positive.

In 2022 Ken posted a rare item on Facebook, to celebrate his best-known book's translation from the original English into the Polish language, as the single text chosen for a special printing by the Polish Fundraiser's Association. "Not bad," he observed, "for a book that's been around more than 30 years."

Among the flood of supportive comments in response to this news was the following succinct observation from the world's most famous fundraising academic, Professor Adrian Sargeant of The Institute for

Sustainable Philanthropy, who has written the foreword to this special edition. He described *Relationship Fundraising* then as

*“THE most influential, well written and beautifully warm text in fundraising.”*

He was not alone, as the comments in the following section show. We could go on, and on. But now, as you hold a copy of the third edition in your hands, you can judge for yourself.

Happy fundraising!

**Jim Hilborn,**

PUBLISHER

CIVIL SECTOR PRESS INTERNATIONAL, TORONTO, CANADA

# How this book came about and what it's about

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by Ken Burnett.



*I felt what was wanted was a simple, factual guide to how to do fundraising, while Stephen believed any new work should have more attitude, take a ballsier, more confrontational stance...*

I remember clearly the precise moment that I decided to write the first edition of this book. It was on a train coming back from Bristol to London in November 1990 after the Institute of Fundraising's Wales and West Region's annual conference. (The Chartered Institute of Fundraising is the professional association that provides training and standards for fundraisers in the United Kingdom, similar to North America's Association of Fundraising Professionals, the Fundraising Institute of Australia, and others.) I was with the Institute's director at the time, Stephen Lee, and we were discussing the absence of any good British books on the subject of fundraising. We both agreed there was a gap that needed filling, but I felt what was wanted was a simple, factual guide to how to do fundraising, while Stephen believed any new work should have more attitude, take a ballsier, more confrontational stance, particularly as there was so much going wrong in fundraising at the time, which needed putting right.

I remember this conversation well not just because of its unusual setting, nor because it probably set me on the path to becoming an author (of a sort), but because at intervals during the course of this discussion we were trying to listen to the crackly radio on Stephen's personal stereo, which he held against the train's window to improve reception as we rumbled across the West Country. This was not normal commuter practice. Our interest in the radio that day was the promised announcement of the results in the ballot electing a leader for Britain's Conservative Party, which led ultimately to the ousting of Britain's first woman Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher.

In between bouts of broken reception and occasional excitement from Westminster, Stephen and I would return to debating the need for a



*I set out not just to review current procedures and practices but also to point toward a better, more sustainable way for the future.*

good, up-to-the-minute British book on fundraising, and what shape it should take. So the germ of the idea for what became *Relationship Fundraising* was planted on that train journey, and grew from there. Within about a year the first edition was written. Its almost immediate success on publication rather surprised me and, I suspect, a few others too. Copies were sold in around forty countries and instead of having remaindered copies on my hands the book has had to be reprinted several times. It's been in print continuously ever since.

Since then, of course, quite a few other books have appeared from British authors on the subject of fundraising, which reflects the growth of interest and professionalism in fundraising over recent decades and the health and vigour of the fundraising profession.

In fact, there has been a worldwide explosion in fundraising books on almost any aspect of fundraising, from ethics to the Internet and from major gifts to managing change. Such a wealth of knowledge just didn't exist in the early 1990s.

I suppose my book's claim to special recognition is that it addresses a subject that struck a chord then and still continues to do so, because the problems I addressed then still dominate. My summary of fundraising practice revolves around a particular point of view, that technology and aggressive marketing are getting in the way of what really matters to fundraisers, our relationships with our donors, and are undermining the basis of trust and confidence that is so crucial to effective fundraising.

So I set out not just to review current procedures and practices but also to point toward a better, more sustainable way for the future. Much has moved on since that first edition, and much has stayed the same. But my objectives now in revising and expanding this text are unchanged — fundraising, internationally, needs to do many things very differently if it's to have any chance of realising the potential presented by the new era of responsible fundraising.

### **Relationship Fundraising 2: the donor strikes back!**

In 1996 a sequel to *Relationship Fundraising* appeared. After five years of sustained and healthy debate generated by its predecessor I wrote *Friends for Life: Relationship Fundraising in Practice*, partly as a practical



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guide to show through real examples how organisations are tackling the challenges and opportunities that relationship fundraising provides, and partly to show its many doubters that, correctly applied, the original theory can actually enable fundraisers to raise substantially more money than its application will cost.

*Friends for Life* features sixteen detailed case histories from fundraising organisations from the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada. As well as illustrating the problems and the pitfalls, these stories show how relationship fundraising can be made to work and the substantial benefits it can bring. Extracting the lessons from these cases was an instructive yet sobering experience, because although I was undoubtedly able to report success and to show that relationship fundraising does work, much of that success was also partial, half-hearted and transient, the result of a flaw not in the concept but in its application. And I was presenting the stories of the best! What about the rest? I came to realise that initiatives to develop a donor-based approach were stalling and ultimately failing because the organisations applying them were not fully committed to the concept and so were failing to invest the time, people and resources necessary to ensure success.

### **The choice**

In the spring of 2001 I had to make a choice. Copies of *Relationship Fundraising* were running low again, so I had to decide either to print the book as it was for a fourth time or allow it to die a natural death. There was another option. I could update and reissue my book to ensure it stayed as relevant as possible to a new generation of fundraisers in a new millennium. That's what I chose to do, mainly because I was still getting correspondence on the book, still getting invited around the world to give seminars based on its theories, and still had people telling me that despite its age most of the original text remained as relevant as it was when written, if not more so. Twenty years after writing this, that choice confronts me again. And, amazingly, that last sentence is still widely held to be true. Some say it's even more relevant now, than ever.

For this new edition in 2024, as in 2002, I tried to adopt a policy of not changing anything in the original text unless I had to, other than to update, correct any instances where time has proved me wrong, or comment when it's proved me right. In 2002 the updating had not been

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*Concepts such as donor care and customer service were enthusiastically embraced...*

a simple text revision, ...so much had changed in the fundraising world over the preceding decade that I found the original book needed quite extensive surgery. The result was two completely new chapters and substantial revision and addition. So, unsurprisingly for this 2024 edition, the 2002 text has had to be extensively changed in places, and as so much has changed I've added 15 additional feature articles, the appendices, that I think are important now, and were not on my agenda back then.

In 2002 I added a new ending and felt I should explain why. In a quotation reproduced on the sleeve of the first edition, Giles Pegram (then appeals director at Britain's National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) prophesied that 'the ideas contained in this book will revolutionise fundraising in the next decade.'

I'm sorry to say his prophecy was only partly fulfilled. Certainly the last decade of the twentieth century did see concepts of relationship building very much in vogue among fundraisers around the world and I'm sure my book played a part in this. The mantras of being 'donor-led' and 'customer-focused' became fashionable and commonplace, as did ritual denial of mass marketing and denouncing of the blunderbuss approach to communication. Concepts such as donor care and customer service were enthusiastically embraced by fundraisers in conference halls and workshops, if not in their daily fundraising practice. Nevertheless, throughout this period the volume of fundraising communications still mushroomed while their diversity remained fairly static and their relevance frequently questionable. Donors have become much more exposed to and more concerned about their role as targets for inappropriate, indistinguishable requests from fundraisers. Fundraiser's attitudes have improved widely in the first quarter of the 21st century and progress has been made, but there are still more changes that need to come if campaigning fundraising is to achieve its full potential for good in all our societies.

### **Please note**

This was never intended to be an expert work. I am not an expert, and I am rather anxious not to become one — ever since I realised that Noah's Ark was designed by an amateur and the Titanic was designed by an expert.

Fundraising is delightfully free of experts. Most people in fundraising,

*People who give their time are in every way as important as people who give their money. Their gift of time can achieve every bit as much as a financial donation.*

even those who are very long in the tooth, are only too ready to admit they haven't seen it all. I am lucky enough to have been involved in the business of fundraising for a very long time. I'm further fortunate to have worked alongside many of the world's best and most experienced fundraisers on a wide range of promotional projects for virtually every type and shade of fundraising organisation. I have had at least as many dismal failures as spectacular successes and most of the rest have been somewhere in between — quiet, unspectacular little money-earners. So, this book is also not a scholarly work. It is a practitioner's observations. Parts of it may be controversial. You may disagree with some of what I say. If so, please let me know.

It is also not complete. My fundraising experience does not include much that's worth saying about several specialist areas of fundraising — special events, corporate fundraising, local activities, volunteers. That's why you won't find much about these areas in this book — it's not because I don't think they are important. I wish I did know more about volunteers, because that seems to me to be an area of enormous potential for the organisations we work for and for the good work they support. People who give their time are in every way as important as people who give their money. Their gift of time can achieve every bit as much as a financial donation. I have been a volunteer myself and I find it a richly rewarding experience, so I know that here again there is a two-way relationship where both volunteer and cause can benefit. I hope that some of what I say in this book will also apply to volunteers and that those people whose job it is to encourage and coordinate the efforts of volunteers will find at least some parts of it useful.

Inevitably there is an amount of overlap between chapters, although I've tried my best to limit it. The subjects I'm writing about — donors, research, marketing, communications, dangers, opportunities, and so on — are not isolated compartments and each in some way or other inextricably involves most of the other subjects. Consequently, editing out duplication is not only difficult but often impossible. I have tried to remove the more obvious repetitions, save those where it is justified by the importance of the subject.

Also, of necessity, I have assumed that you, the reader, have a reasonable knowledge of the major areas of fundraising. As a result, I

haven't sought to describe the basics of fundraising marketing such as direct mail or press advertising, in absolute detail.

### **Outline of this book**

If I have missed anything important while preparing this book, I apologise — and trust you will let me know so I – or rather, my successors – can put it right in the future. For further information on a wide range of fundraising and marketing subjects, please refer to the links and promotions in the appendices and at the back of this book. Although as I write I have pictured my audience beginning at the beginning and reading eagerly and transfixed through to the end, you may well find specific topics of such interest that you wish to go directly to them. If you paid for this copy then that's surely your prerogative.

Here then is a brief summary of what each chapter has to offer:

*Chapter 1* is essentially an introduction to the field of fundraising as I see it, to lay the groundwork for a shared understanding of the topics discussed in subsequent chapters. It concludes — as do all the chapters — with a list of action points, which I hope you will find useful as convenient *aides-mémoire* to enable you more easily to put relationship fundraising into practice.

*Chapter 2* considers the public's attitude to fundraisers and fundraisers' attitudes to themselves. It shows how important fundraising can be and reviews the range and scale of opportunities that confront today's fundraisers.

*Chapter 3* sets out in detail the essential foundations of fundraising. It describes why people give and what makes a successful fundraiser.

*Chapter 4* offers a definition of relationship fundraising as a philosophy and illustrates what it can do for you. It describes the nine keys to building a relationship and considers one fundraising essential that is the cornerstone of relationship fundraising.

*Chapter 5* reviews what donors want. It looks at the positive and negative aspects of research, introduces 'the golden generation' and the donor of the future, and considers the importance of trust, faith and pride.

*It shows how much more cost-effective it is to develop relationships with existing friends than it is to have to find new ones and it gives practical advice on how to retain, recognise and reward your existing donors.*

*Chapter 6* looks at the body of general and academic research that has grown up over recent years and considers the significance of donors' trust and confidence, as well as why it is important that you should strive to stay ahead of your competitors.

*Chapter 7* is about making and avoiding mistakes. It begins with the recognition that fundraisers are no less fallible than the rest of the population, and it works through the major pitfalls and the ways to bridge or avoid them.

*Chapter 8* takes us from mass marketing to individual relationships, describes the marketing plan, targeting, segmentation, the five marketing Ps (as distinct from the 6Ps defined by the UK's Commission on the Donor Experience, see page 523), how to create the right image, and how to use the telephone creatively. Through these it shows how the culture of fundraising can positively influence, direct, and control the culture of marketing.

*Chapter 9* is all about keeping your friends and making donors feel special. It shows how much more cost-effective it is to develop relationships with existing friends than it is to have to find new ones and it gives practical advice on how to retain, recognise and reward your existing donors.

*Chapter 10* outlines the myriad ways in which we now choose to communicate with our donors. It offers lots of practical advice on ways to be much better at it.

*Chapter 11* is all about recognising opportunities and getting the best out of people. It outlines a variety of ways of offering donors real involvement in your organisation's work and mission and describes a range of practical opportunities you might introduce to boost your fundraising performance and strengthen your relationships with donors.

*Chapter 12* looks in detail at the fundraiser's Aladdin's cave, legacy fundraising, an area of vast potential where those brave enough, creative enough, and early enough might discover the keys to the last great opportunity to help a donor influence the world.

*Chapter 13* is all about change. It reviews a wide range of recent developments in fundraising including a few controversial new challenges, then offers some thoughts on future change.

*Chapter 14* concludes the original book with a little crystal-ball-gazing, and comes up with some serious threats to our future which you can consider alongside a raft of genuinely exciting opportunities. It also shows why preparing suitable strategies for both will be time well spent.

Fundraising — and especially relationship fundraising — is all about individuals rather than groups. To bring this concept to life, after each chapter I pause to introduce and profile a specific donor — one composite but readily identifiable individual who demonstrates a part of the spectrum of possibilities that every donor presents. Their purpose is to remind you that donors are individuals, all different and that each represents a range of opportunities. Make of them what you will. As you prepare your fundraising appeals, picture how these people, and others you have met, will react to them; you may well form a clearer idea of the persuasiveness of your work than you can by reading it from the fundraiser's point of view.

After the preliminary sections and the 14 chapters there then follows 15 appendices, each designed to explore an important aspect of relationship fundraising that I didn't think to include in the earlier editions. These cover a range of issues, developments and opportunities and are introduced in detail on page 385.

### **Some closing remarks**

For many years the closing remarks at the International Fundraising Congress (the gathering of professional fundraisers from around the world that takes place each year outside Amsterdam, in the Netherlands) were delivered by Guy Stringer, formerly director of Oxfam, one-time senior executive with a major manufacturing company who became one of fundraising's most eminent and respected leaders. At Oxfam Guy gained more experience of and insight into the power and potential of fundraising than most of us are likely to achieve in a lifetime.

As Guy addressed the several hundred delegates who had just survived three intensive days learning at the frontiers of the art and science of

their profession, he sought to remind them of their larger purpose of being there. Techniques and skills are limited without a clear purpose, he told them. To remind fundraisers of what it's really all about he would recount some stories from his own long experience designed to send the delegates off with their spirits soaring and sights set high. He invariably succeeded, because he knows what makes good fundraisers tick. With his permission I'll relate two of Guy's stories here.

### **Who Am I?**

"Surat is a town in western India and the last time that I was there I arrived by train. You come out of the station and walk across a square, up a long hill and down a lane, where at the top, on the left-hand side, there is a leprosarium. It is run by sturdy Catholic sisters, some Indian and some Spanish. I arrived late at night and was quite tired and would have preferred to have thrown a bucket of water over myself and lain down. But Sister Mary insisted that I walk round the leprosarium with her and I have found it a mistake to disagree with Catholic sisters.

"So round we went and to my astonishment there were little collections of people sitting round hurricane lamps on the ground, and I said to the sister, "What are they doing?" She said that the young patients were teaching the old people to read and write. And so they were – with the children saying, "No granny, you don't do it that way but like this." The only things that Oxfam had provided were the slates, the chalk and the little hurricane lamps.

"When we got to the gates of the leprosarium I saw they were closed, but in the gloom you could see on the far side a little gang of people and the sister said to me, "Guy, open the gates." I did so and a family carried in a man. The sister led the way and they put the man on a table in the clinic. If they had put him on the ground he would have fallen because his legs stopped at his knees. The sister knelt down and looked at him and said to me, "There are worms in his wounds," and I looked and there were.

"Then a strange thing happened and it was rather like a camera going click, click. I could see who the sister was, she was somebody who could bring effective help to the patient. And I could see who the patient was, he needed help and badly. But who was the third person in the frame, in a Marks and Spencer sweater, size 40, do not boil. How did he fit?

*Who was the third person in the frame, in a Marks and Spencer sweater, size 40, do not boil. How did he fit?*



*Do not forget that techniques and skills themselves are limited. What you must do is to stand up and encourage and develop a vision of a new society in which all of us may dwell in peace and harmony.*

“The deduction from this of course is that if you are to be concerned in trying to help the poor, the handicapped, and the deprived you must be totally involved. You must try to project in what you write and say in your advertisements and public addresses the courage of the people, their determination to advance the lives of their families, their responsibility one to another, and you must never at any time undervalue them.

### **Flying a Kite**

“El Salvador has probably the worst record for human rights in the world. It is a tiny country the size of Wales, but people are murdered at night and if you wish to see your friends again you visit the city rubbish dump and there you will find their bodies. That’s where they are battered to death. As a result many families live in church refuges under the care and defence of the church, because if they left these places they would end up, as so many others do, outside the city, in the dump.

“I visited one with about two hundred families and hundreds of tiny children. It was a classic demonstration of the ability of women because the place was immaculate. I would have got it in a muddle in five minutes flat. There was only one small piece of land open to the sky, which was surrounded by a very high wire fence. The children congregated in masses on this tiny piece of playground — the only bit of open air to be found. And they were making paper kites with newspaper, little bits of stick and some string. But of course if you fly a kite you need wind and you need some space and the children found it extremely difficult to get their kites off the ground. The result was that the big wire fence was simply covered with battered kites.

“Eventually I left to go, walked out into the road, looked up and down – it is always wise in El Salvador to see who is about – and walked down the road to turn right at a corner at the bottom. Before I did I turned round and looked up and two little kites had cleared the fence and were lifting up jerking bit by bit into the dark blue sky. Some people would say that this is just some string, a bit of newspaper, some little sticks, and two little boys, but in fact it is more than that. It is a triumph of the human spirit over the grim environment in which so many dwell.

“You came here to learn about fundraising and will have learned much about new techniques and skills in your time here. I hope you have enjoyed it, but do not forget that techniques and skills themselves are limited. What you

*Fundraising is more than a job. In the right hands, it is a powerful force for change and while that change is under way it should be an inspirational beacon of hope.*

must do is to stand up and encourage and develop a vision of a new society in which all of us may dwell in peace and harmony.”

In quoting Guy’s words I can’t invoke the sincerity and passion of his delivery or recreate the emotional charge in his voice that ensured there wasn’t a dry eye in the house. Guy’s stories were magic. They gave fundraisers a lift and reminded us that our profession is more special than most other trades or businesses. For me, that made Guy’s closing address perhaps the most important part of each year’s International Fund Raising Congress. Fundraising is more than a job. In the right hands, it is a powerful force for change and while that change is under way it should be an inspirational beacon of hope. Fundraisers have good reason to be proud of their profession.

In producing this new edition I aim to do more than just amplify and reinforce the wisdom of a relationship fundraising approach and so strengthen the position of those who believe it right for their organisation. In the first of the appendices on page 391 I outline the scale and severity of the risk to the long-term prosperity and viability of our entire charity sector when fundraisers get things badly wrong, which as you’ll soon see they are highly prone to do. So, both for the prosperity of our organisations and for the long-term health of the nonprofit sector — which I now much prefer to refer to as the ‘for change’ sector, so as to focus on what we’re for, not what we’re not for — fundraisers have to start taking relationship fundraising more seriously. The investment of time, people and money in building mutually rewarding and beneficial relationships with donors is not just prudent, it is essential. Our futures depend upon it.

**Ken Burnett**

SUFFOLK, ENGLAND.  
SPRING, 2024



## About the author

Ken Burnett is an internationally recognised author, consultant and inspirational speaker on fundraising, marketing and communications for for-change organisations worldwide. He was UK director and director of fundraising and communications at ActionAid from 1977 to 1982, when he founded the influential Burnett Associates agency group, the first marketing and communications agency in Europe to specialise in working with campaigning social change organisations. In 2003, working with Alan Clayton, Ken was chairman of Alan's agency, Cascaid, then together they set up Clayton Burnett/Revolutionise.

Ken is author of several seminal books including *Relationship Fundraising*, *Friends for Life*, *The Zen of Fundraising*, *Tiny Essentials of an Effective Volunteer Board*, *Storytelling can change the world* and *The essence of Campaigning Fundraising in 52 exhibits and 199 weblinks*. In 2008 his first non-fundraising book, *The Field by the River* was published, an affectionate natural history of 2.4 hectares of ancient field and forest in Brittany, Northern France. Ken has served on several trustee boards for charities large and small – from 1998 to 2003 Ken was chairman of trustees of ActionAid International, from 2012 to 2018 he was also an independent trustee of the UK Disasters Emergency Committee. He is a former vice chair of the UK's Institute of Fundraising, was co-founder and a trustee of SOFII, the Showcase of Fundraising Innovation and Inspiration and a trustee of the World Land Trust. In 2016 Ken Burnett co-founded the Commission on the Donor Experience, with Giles Pegram CBE, which led to the largest ever mobilisation of volunteers in the UK's fundraising sector, to redefine fundraising best practice.

When not travelling or giving seminars Ken spends his time at home in rural Suffolk, where in addition to discovering a love for writing,

directing and acting in amateur village plays, he's now an enthusiastic fledgling potter. In 2021, with his partner Virginia, Ken walked all 800 kilometres of the *Camino Frances* in just 39 days, from St. Jean Pied de Port in Southern France to Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Northern Spain. He still addresses the Haggis every Burns Night at his local pub, the Huntingfield Arms.

© Ken Burnett, June 2024

Curtain call for the cast of *Mildred: the power of a dream*. As well as writing and directing, Ken played the misogynistic and blinkered Bishop of Norwich, who eventually gets to see the light. Photo: Edward Watson



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