



Seventh-day Adventist Church
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION



Philanthropic
Service for Institutions

Finding Meaning in the Mysterious—Careers in Fundraising (Part One)

Another school year has begun. With this comes the impulse to take stock. One pervasive thought for the young person, particularly the university student, is the question, “what am I going to do for the rest of my life?” The same question might be asked by a mid-career changer, a bored person, or someone seeking meaning in life. Choices abound, as do opinions, myths, perceptions and misperceptions about the choices.

What few career counselors will tell you, regardless of your age or career status, is how many opportunities for career excitement and fulfillment are available within the nonprofit sector, particularly in fundraising. They don’t tell you this because they don’t know, for the most part.

In the not too distant past, fundraising was a career that, for the most part, just happened and often was misunderstood. Few in the ranks of experienced fundraisers actually planned this career path from their youth. Fortunately, this has changed in the past decade or two.

Fundraising is increasingly becoming a recognized and respected career. There are many ways and resources for learning and preparing for a career in fundraising. It’s no longer a mysterious or mystifying way to making a living, one that causes parents and friends to look puzzled and ask, “But what do you really do?” It’s a professional activity that leads to the strengthening of the nonprofit sector, to building better organizations, communities and people.

Before searching out information about fundraising as a career, however, ask yourself these questions.

Are you a high achiever? Are you willing to do things others might not understand or be comfortable with? Can you risk disappointment and even rejection?

Do you have a strong urge to reach out? Do you want to make a difference? Do you like new situations and people?

What matters most to you? Do you want to see others reach their full potential, and achieve it yourself?

What are you willing to invest and to give up? How much responsibility do you want, and how much can you handle? Can you think for yourself?

Are you willing to strive for nothing less than your fullest potential and promote such success in others?

Positive answers to the above may indicate that fundraising is for you. Watch for upcoming messages in this space for more information on fundraising as a career. Share this or other materials with a student or anyone who is seeking a new career, a career change, or a more meaningful approach to life.