

# A Poverty or Partnership Mindset?



Imagine you are boarding a flight. As you slowly move through first class, you envy those wider seats and free drinks. Then you notice something. A prominent nonprofit leader is sitting there in first class.

What would you think?

If you were flying from Calcutta to the UK or America in the 1990s, this might have been your experience. Because sometimes seated in first class was Mother Teresa.

She would go from helping some of the poorest people in the world to traveling and sitting next to some of the wealthiest.

Why? Because Mother Teresa was sitting where the money was. During the flight, she would fundraise and raise thousands more than the cost of a first-class ticket.

Mother Teresa showed us that while she worked to help those in poverty, she didn't have what's called a Poverty Mindset.

## What's the Poverty Mindset?

The Poverty Mindset is the term we use to describe people's negative thoughts or beliefs about fundraising. The thoughts might be:

- Why would someone give to my cause, or my campaign?
- Donors won't give if I ask.
- I'm not good at fundraising.
- I need to do (insert task) before I start fundraising.

Or sometimes, people think of fundraising like Oliver Twist reluctantly asking "Please, sir, I want some more?"

The problem with this view of fundraising is it positions you as less than the donor and assumes the donor is giving to you out of pity. But the reality is donors don't give out of pity. They give because they want to see change happen.

## What's the Partnership Mindset?

Instead of having a Poverty Mindset, effective fundraisers adopt the Partnership Mindset.

In the **Partnership Mindset**, you understand that both the **donor and the candidate are needed to make political change happen**. Neither one is above the other, and instead, both are partners. The candidate needs money and wants to get elected, and the donor has money and wants to see change happen. But neither the donor nor the candidate can do it alone. Both are partnered together to make change happen.

## Fundraising with the Partnership Mindset

Think about where you might have the Poverty Mindset. What are the thoughts holding you back from making the ask?

Example: You think, *"I'd be interrupting the donor if I made the call now?"*

Next, think about this thought from the Partnership Mindset. If someone you knew ran for office and called you, would it feel like an interruption? Likely you'd be glad they called and want to see them succeed.

### The Bottom Line

Reject the Poverty Mindset and instead think of your donors as partners in your campaign. You want to run and get elected, and they want to see political change happen. Both of you are partners together to win.