

A SEVEN-DAY CLEANSE TO REFRESH YOUR PERSPECTIVE



As our bodies process and filter the pollutants in our environments, it can be important to give ourselves the opportunity to start fresh. One way of bolstering your physical health is taking a cleanse, ridding yourself of toxins and creating space for proper nourishment and fitness.

Likewise, development professionals can become bogged down by the daily pressures and minutia of their jobs. Meeting metrics, collaborating with stakeholders, responding to organizational pressures—all these things, while necessary, can cause fundraisers to lose sight of the purpose behind their work.

This week, make an effort to refresh your perspective and rediscover what makes your work meaningful to you by taking this Fundraiser's Seven-Day Cleanse:



Search and Destroy Negativity

No job is without its everyday problems. Pay attention today. What part of your job is the most tedious, discouraging, or difficult? What causes your attitude to become negative?

Now, apply the Locus of Control. Is this something you can control—perhaps a knowledge area that you could learn more about, or a task that is unnecessary and should be eliminated or delegated to someone else? Is it something you can influence—for instance, a difficult situation with a colleague or donor that could be addressed with a conversation? Maybe it is something that is totally uncontrollable. Assess the problem and determine what can be done to destroy the negativity.

Most importantly, remember that your attitude is always something you can control.



DAY 2

Recognize and Release Disappointment

Disappointment on the job can cause lingering resentment and unhappiness—and it is often most difficult to deal with when it is a result of a personal error. When a professional mistake is made, these situations can create an aura of negativity that lasts long after the event itself. Today, consider: Have you faced any personal disappointments recently?

In order to thrive going forward, it is important to recognize and release your disappointment. Focus on what you can learn from your mistake. Determine what can be done in the future to avoid similar mistakes. Make amends, if possible. And then, make a conscious decision to let go of your disappointment and start fresh.



DAY 3

Honor Personal Stories

You got into fundraising because you care about this profession, and the meaningful things you help your organization to accomplish are always a cause for celebration. Take time today to reflect on your own personal story. What is it about your life experience that makes what you do especially significant to you?

As you reflect, consider: Donors also have very personal reasons for giving, and the most meaningful contributions are based on some life experience. For this reason, you share something very important with donors—a passion for the cause, based on a life experience. This is the foundation of your work; this is why you do what you do. Let your personal story, and the stories of others, motivate you today.



DAY 4

Discover Inspiration

An important fundraising principle is that meaningful philanthropy is “through the organization, rather than to the organization.” In other words, donors find meaning through what is accomplished by the organization—the ultimate impact of their contributions. You can find meaning in your work in the same way.

Today, make an effort to see with new eyes the work your organization is doing. Remind yourself of the projects and programs that are underway. Experience the stories of successes that make the job rewarding. If your organization or leader has a Vision Story, review it. Spend time where the work is being done, and remind yourself of the incredible things that are happening all around you.

Let the knowledge that your work as a fundraiser makes this possible inspire you.



DAY 5

Set Up for Success

As development professionals are well aware, this job requires a number of competing tasks, responsibilities, and challenges. Reflect on your daily habits. Do you feel generally on top of the tasks on your table, or are they on top of you? Do you have a system that works when it comes to aligning the tasks that help you succeed?

If you feel overwhelmed, give yourself a moment to breathe. Take some time today to organize your work space and plan your week. Even simple steps like making a list of tasks, prioritizing by importance, and having the discipline to cut out or deemphasize unneeded distractions, can make a big difference. One development professional said, “The time it takes to organize your world is paid back many times.”



Find Opportunities for Improvement

Improvement is about more than looking ahead to what is next. Instead, it begins with assessing how you have performed in the past. Take time today to remember past accomplishments. Who helped you achieve these goals? What knowledge did you apply? What strategies and tactics did you utilize? Ultimately, were your goals achieved?

Now, examine your current and future goals. Should you approach these in the same way? Would mentoring, training, or other resources be useful to you as you approach your goals? With a fresh perspective, allow yourself to acknowledge where you may need additional help to achieve greater things, and set your plan in motion today.



Establish Nourishing Habits

It has been six days since you began your cleanse. Now that you have spent some time focused on improvement, you are equipped to make lasting changes. What habits have caused negative thinking? What has made you more productive?

Today, identify what you learned this week that you would like to apply in the future in order to perform your job at the optimal level. Additionally, identify the habits that drained your energy and kept you feeling bogged down. Write out a plan, committing to positive changes. For example:

- “I commit to spend one hour every week with the [students/patients/ other recipients of services] to hear their stories and be inspired.”
- “I commit to improve my working relationship with [faculty member/ physician/other stakeholder].”
- “I commit to begin every week by organizing, prioritizing, and strategizing for one hour.”

We hope that this cleanse helps refresh your perspective on your incredible achievements and important role as a fundraiser, and that your knowledge of the impact your organization makes inspires you to accomplish even greater things.

For a professional development experience exploring the heart of philanthropy, attend a public offering of *The Art and Science of Donor Development*.