Boards and Fundraising by Burke Keegan

How to Ask for Money
Ten Rules to Live By

1. Don't say "no" for anybody: "He'll never give" is probably your fear talking. Let people say no - or yes - for themselves.

2. Don't sneak up on anyone: The prospect must be ready to hear your pitch. Anything less is an ambush - and doesn't work.

3. Don't play "Guess what number I'm thinking": Do your homework, ask for an appropriate amount and be prepared to negotiate.

4. Don't apologize: If the work your non-profit is doing is important, what is there to apologize for?

5. Don't rush or assume that the prospect knows what your non-profit does, or why that work matters: Tell your story.

6. On the other hand, don't talk too much: Good asking is at least half listening.

7. Don't wait until your presentation materials are perfect: Stop procrastinating and go do some fundraising.

8. Don't ask for a major gift via phone or mail: If someone can write a big check, she deserves to be asked in person.

9. Don't forget to thank everyone: Personal notes are required after every prospect meeting.

10. Don't neglect to write your own check: Give at a sacrificial level and there's no one you can't ask.