

REGARD EVERY INTERRUPTION, DELAY, OR POSTPONEMENT AS TREASON

I want to start with a story. It took place 110 years ago in the ballroom of the old Blackstone Hotel in Chicago. There's a very important lesson for you.

It's a true story about Dr. Frederick Taylor Gates, a Baptist Minister, and a luncheon meeting he had with 200 of Chicago's most prominent leaders. I have a feeling you haven't read about the luncheon before. Even though it happened over a century ago, I assure you it's every bit as relevant today as it was then. That's why I want you to take time to read this story.

It's all about raising money and asking for a gift. You're going to find this fascinating.

Dr. Gates was John D. Rockefeller's closest confidant and advisor. One day Rockefeller said: "Dr. Gates, I've been thinking for some time about starting a new university. I want it to be a Baptist institution and I've been thinking about Chicago. Heaven knows those folks in Chicago need something like this. Let's pray about it."

They prayed.

"I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give \$600,000 to start the university as a challenge— if the good people of Chicago will contribute \$400,000. (Even then, a

challenge gift provided an incentive!) Dr. Gates, I would like you to go to Chicago and raise the money.”

Gates had never raised money before, but he went to Chicago. And to everyone’s absolute amazement he raised it, and in a matter of only a month.

The folks in Chicago were so delighted with the response and the results that they invited Dr. Gates to a luncheon with the city’s most prominent leaders. They wanted him to explain how he performed this extraordinary act of magic. In those days, \$400,000 was \$400,000! And no one in Chicago had ever raised that kind of money before.

And that brings us, if you recall, to the beginning of our story. To the luncheon meeting at the Blackstone Hotel.

I’m going to do some editing now because I judge from reading his speech that it was over three hours in duration. (Those Baptist ministers do run on!) But everything you are about to read is a direct quotation.

Get out an underliner and a pen and start making some notes. This is the kind of stuff you are going to want to put into practice when you are asking for a gift.

The group was incredulous. “Dr. Gates, how did you possibly manage to raise all that money and in such a short time?” Here is his response, all of it direct quotes from his speech.

1. Dress well. Put on your best clothes and let them be costly. Let your linen be immaculate. See that your boots are polished, and also that your hands are kept clean and your hair well brushed, not only in the morning but kept so throughout the rough and tumble of the day.

People are judged by these apparent trifles of personal appearance far more than is often supposed. And the streets of Chicago soil the person hourly.

2. Go to the subject of your solicitation and do not allow the impression of the first sixty seconds to be that the prospect is in for a long talk. On the contrary, in various indirect ways, awaken the happy anticipation that your stay will be brief without being abrupt.
3. You must keep good natured. I now wish to say that you must also keep your victim, if I may so call him, also good natured and this throughout. Make the interview continuously pleasant for him.
4. If you find him big with gift, do not rush him too eagerly to the birth. Let him take his time with genial encouragement. Make him feel that he is making the gift, not that it is being taken from him with violence.

5. Appeal only to his noblest motives.
6. Never let a week pass without some public notice of your work.
7. It is of the highest importance that you have a companion in your canvas, in all respects on a par with yourself. Plan out your teamwork so you do not collide.

Know who is to take the ball and who is to lead in the principal play. Your victim will, unconsciously and instinctively, decide with which of the two he prefers to talk. Let him make his choice.

8. Let your victim talk freely, especially in the early part of the interview. While he is thus revealing himself, he is giving you the opportunity to study him and all his peculiarities. By the time he is through you will be prepared, if you are alert, with your plan of successful attack.

Never argue. Never contradict. Never oppose anything which he says that you are not absolutely bound to oppose by the very essential nature of your mission. In all else yield.

If your man is talkative, let him talk, talk, talk. Give your fish plenty of line and listen with the deepest of interest to every syllable.

9. Withdraw cordiality when beaten. That is to say: When you fail to get your subscription at the time, which may be as much as three or four times out of five, he will watch closely with what temper you withdraw. Make him feel that the interview has been a distinctly pleasurable one to you. Even if he declines to give, make him a friend of the college for all time.

10. But though he declined, do not regard or let him regard the matter as closed. You will be near him again in a few days and things may look different to him.

It is a good plan never to allow a man to give a final *no* or to commit himself in words definitely and finally against your cause. If you see a *no* coming, if it is evident he is making no progress, or progress backward, excuse yourself before the fatal word has come out and withdraw so as to give you an excuse for coming again.

11. Aim so to conduct a canvas as to raise up a permanent constituency for the cause. Try to make every man you canvas a friend of yourself and of the college whether he gives or not.

12. Before entering on your canvas, meditate long on the downright merits of the question and do not ask a man for a dollar until you are in the depths of your soul satisfied that, viewed from the highest motives, your cause fully justifies all the gifts and the sacrifices you ask.

13. Work continuously, rapidly, and at a hot pace. If your work flags, you are gone. Never allow in yourself the smallest relaxation of the nervous tension and if not in yourself, also not in your friends or in the public until your work is done.

Canvas every day and all day, going rapidly from man to man, rain or shine. Read nothing, write nothing, think of nothing so long as the canvas continues. Speak publicly on that subject only, bringing every ounce of vital energy, every moment of every waking time to the purpose of the canvas. Regard every suggestion involving interruption, delay or postponement as treason.

14. Keep your work before your friends and the public. There will be an increase in momentum. Gradually the work gathers volume, force, breath, momentum until at last it becomes irresistible and rushes on to a successful culmination. This insistent and persistent energy is the easiest road, as well as the shortest, and leads straight to the goal.

15. And finally you will likely find a great majority of men— ninety-nine out of every hundred are in fact pleased and secretly complimented to be courteously and respectfully invited to contribute to a great cause.

And there you have it. That was the birth of the University of Chicago.
You see how easy it all is. Now begin. Start making those calls. You're about to
enter into a glorious experience.